

THE LORE OF CATHAY

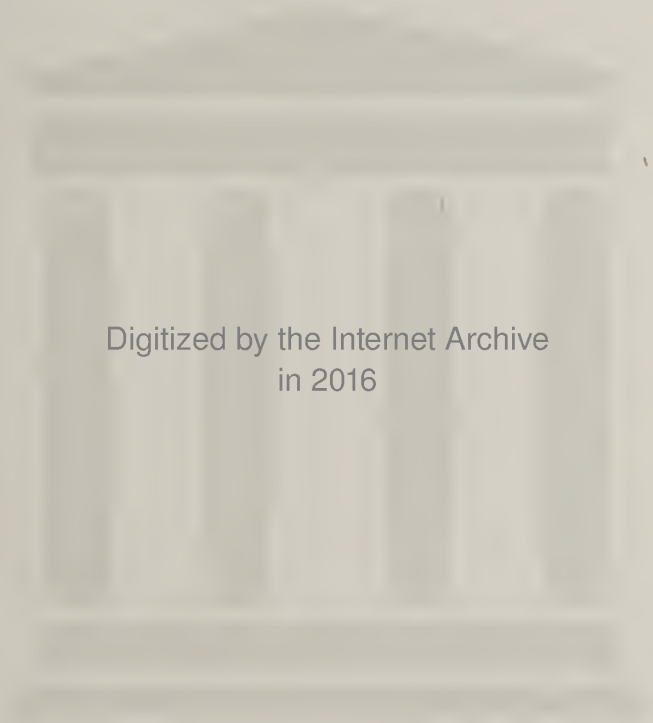
W·A·P·MARTIN



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The Lore of Cathay

Dr. Martin's "Compendium of Information"

A CYCLE OF CATHAY

or

China, South and North

WITH PERSONAL REMINISCENCES BY

W. A. P. MARTIN, D.D., LL.D.

President of the Imperial University of Peking

With Seventy Illustrations, Map and Index, 8vo,
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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK : 158 Fifth Ave. CHICAGO : 63 Washington St.
TORONTO : 27 Richmond St. West.



DR. W. A. P. MARTIN

Æt 73

The Lore of Cathay

or

The Intellect of China

BY

W. A. P. MARTIN, D.D., LL.D.

President of the Chinese Imperial University

AUTHOR OF

"A CYCLE OF CATHAY," "THE SIEGE IN PEKING," ETC., ETC

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK

CHICAGO

TORONTO

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

1901

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(September)

TO THE
HON. JOHN W. FOSTER
FORMERLY SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

“THE Lore of Cathay,” is an essential complement to “A Cycle of Cathay.” The latter represents the active life of the Chinese as it appeared to the writer in the course of a long and varied experience. This book mirrors their intellectual life as it developed under investigations extending through many years of intimate association with Chinese scholars, and of identification with Chinese education.

Its contents comprise the “Hanlin Papers,” revised and enlarged by the addition of much new matter. Its materials have been drawn exclusively from native sources, and are the result of original research. The author has treated, with considerable detail, of subjects so diverse as Chinese education and Chinese alchemy; and he ventures to believe that he throws fresh light on some points of Oriental literature, science and philosophy; and that he may fairly claim, as a field of his own discovery, the international law and diplomacy of the ancient Chinese.

In the *San Kuo Chi* it is laid down as a law of the national life, confirmed by history, that the Chinese Empire, when it has been long united, is sure to be divided; when it has been long divided, is sure to be reunited. Just now the centrifugal forces are portentously active. Should they eventuate in partition, that state of things could not be permanent, though it might accelerate the acquisition of our Western civilization by the people of China. Quickened into new life, they would be sure to

reconstruct the Empire and to take their place among the leading powers of the civilized world.

While the Manchu rulers have made grudging concessions to superior force, they have always, with the exception of Kuang Hsu, contrived to maintain a latent hostility in the minds of their people. That hostility has diminished—strange to say—with each defeat by foreign powers, and it almost disappeared during the reform movement under the young Emperor, which followed the war with Japan.

To prevent the recurrence of outrages it is necessary to foster a fellow-feeling with the rest of the world. As Captain Mahan says: "Toward Asia in its present condition Europe has learned that it has a community of interest that may be defined as the need of bringing the Asian peoples within the compass of the family of Christian States. They will have to insist that currency be permitted to our ideas—liberty to exchange thought in Chinese territory with the individual Chinaman. The open door, both for commerce and for intellectual interaction, should be our aim everywhere in China."

One essential to this intellectual interaction is mutual intellectual comprehension. If China is to be a part of the family of civilized States—Chinese thought, the principles at the basis of Chinese history and life must be understood. It is with the hope that this may be furthered that "The Lore of Cathay" is offered to the Anglo-Saxon public.

W. A. P. M.

PEKING, *July 1st.*

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THE LORE OF CATHAY

THE AWAKENING IN CHINA

FOR a long time the giant of the East has been rubbing his eyes. Each collision with foreign powers has had the effect of making him more conscious of his helpless condition and more ready to open his lids to the light of a new day.

Never was he more wide awake than during the few years following the war with Japan, when the young Emperor, Kuang Hsü, attempted to make his reign an era of reform. The counter-revolution brought about by the Empress Dowager,* and the cosmic shock by which it was succeeded, proved the strength and reality of the reform movement. So far from extinguishing that movement, the effect of this convulsion will be to wake it into fresh activity. The Chinese people may be expected to welcome new ideas with more eagerness than ever before.

This proposition will be received with distrust by some who are skeptical as to the doctrine of human progress. It will be questioned by others, who deride as visionary the efforts of Christian enterprise. Nor will it be readily admitted by that large class who are wont to regard the Chinese mind as hopelessly incrustated with the prejudices of antiquity.

* Having treated that subject in "The Siege in Peking," it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it in this place.

Never have a great people been more misunderstood. They are denounced as stolid, because we are not in possession of a medium sufficiently transparent to convey our ideas to them, or transmit theirs to us; and stigmatized as barbarians, because we want the breadth to comprehend a civilization different from our own. They are represented as servile imitators, though they have borrowed less than any other people; as destitute of the inventive faculty, though the world is indebted to them for a long catalogue of the most useful discoveries; and as clinging with unquestioning tenacity to a heritage of traditions, though they have passed through many and profound changes in the course of their history.

Nothing has done so much to lower them in our esteem and to exclude them from our sympathies as the atrocities of the Boxer outbreak. That, however, was the effect of a sudden recoil, stirred up for political purposes by a usurping Regent and her Manchu agents. Foreigners themselves, they were jealous of anything that tends to disturb the repose of the Chinese mind, or to strengthen the foothold of other foreigners. Exasperated, too, by a series of encroachments on their territory, they gave way to a mad fury that proved contagious. But if the reign of terror was the renovation of France, and the Sepoy mutiny the harbinger of better things for India, why may not this dreadful drama prove to be the birth-pangs of a new China?

That China is not incapable of reformation, we shall show first by a glance at changes that passed over the national mind prior to the first war with England. We shall then pass in review the steps taken in the way of reform in the course of the next fifty years. Finally, we shall describe in outline, the reform movement under the Emperor, Kuang Hsü, which has more right than the

Boxer craze to be accepted as the real attitude of the Chinese mind.

The Chinese have not been stationary, as generally supposed, through the long past of their national life. The national mind has advanced from age to age with a stately march; not indeed always in a direct course, but at each of its great epochs, recording, as we think, a decided gain; like the dawn of an arctic morning, in which the first blush of the eastern sky disappears for many hours, only to be succeeded by a brighter glow, growing brighter yet, after each interval of darkness, as the time of sunrise approaches.

The existence in such a country of such a thing as a national mind is itself an evidence of a susceptibility to change; and, at the same time, a guarantee for the comparative stability of its institutions. It proves that China is not an immense congeries of polyps, each encased in his narrow cell, a workshop and a tomb, and all toiling on without the stimulus of common sympathy or mental reaction. It proves that China is not like Africa, and aboriginal America, or even like British India, an assemblage of tribes with little or no community of feeling. It is a unit, and through all its members there sweeps the mighty tide of a common life.

In the progress of its enormous growth, it has absorbed many a heterogeneous element, which has always been transformed into its own substance by an assimilative power that asserts the marvelous energy of the Chinese civilization. It has, too, undergone many modifications, in consequence of influences operating *ab extra* as well as from within; and though the process of transmission has often been slow, those influences have always extended to the whole body. Within the bounds of China proper, there is no such thing as the waves of

Buddhism or Taoism being arrested at the confines of a particular province; nor is there any district in which the pulsations from the great heart of the empire do not, by virtue of a common language and common feeling, meet with a prompt response.

Yet the existence of this oneness and sympathy,—this nationality of mind, which brings modifications on a vast scale within the range of possibility, necessarily interposes an obstacle in the way of their speedy consummation. Planted on the deep foundations of antiquity, extending over so wide an area, and proudly conscious of its own greatness, its very inertia is opposed to change. In China, accordingly, great revolutions, whether political, religious, or intellectual, have always been slow of accomplishment. Compared with the facility with which these are brought about in some Occidental countries, they resemble the slow revolution of those huge planets on the outskirts of the solar system, which require more than the period of a human life to make the circuit of the sun, while the little planet Mercury wheels round the center once in three months.

Great dynastic changes, involving as they do a period of disintegration, and another of reconstruction, have usually occupied from one to three generations, while the growth of those grand revolutions, which resulted in the ascendancy of a religion or a philosophy, must be reckoned by centuries.

A brief review of some of the more remarkable changes that have occurred in the progress of Chinese civilization, will enable us better to understand the nature of the intellectual movement now going on.

To begin with the development of political ideas. Instead of being wedded to a uniform system of despotic government, the Chinese have lived under as many forms

of government as ancient Rome or modern France. While the Romans passed under their kings, consuls, and emperors, the Chinese had their *tis*, their *wangs*, and their *huang tis*. And as France has passed through the various phases of a feudal and centralized monarchy, a military despotism, and a republic, so China exhibits an equal variety in the forms of her civil government.

When the hand of history first lifts the curtain, two thousand years before the Christian era, it discloses to us an elective monarchy, in which the voice of the people was admitted to express the will of Heaven. Thus, Yao, the model monarch of antiquity, was raised to the throne by the voice of the nobles, in lieu of his elder brother, who was set aside on account of his disorderly life. Yao, in turn, set aside his own son, and called on the nobles to name a successor, when Shun was chosen. Again, Shun, passing by an unworthy son, transmitted the "yellow" to an able minister, the great Yu.

Yu, though a good sovereign, departed from these illustrious precedents, and incurred the censure of "converting the empire into a family estate." The hereditary principle became fixed. Branches of the imperial family were assigned portions of the empire, and their descendants succeeding to their principalities, the feudal system was confirmed.

This, in China, is the classical form of government, but it was overthrown completely two thousand years ago, by one of the most sweeping revolutions on the records of history. Since that date, China has been a consolidated monarchy, living in complete isolation; without neighbors, and without a conception of international intercourse. This has been a fruitful source of conflict with the great nations of the West and East.

Under the dynasty of Han, about the commencement

of the Christian era, a still more important modification was introduced into the constitution of the empire—viz., a democratic element, in virtue of which appointments to office were not left to the caprice of the sovereign and his favorites. This consisted in testing the capacity of candidates by a literary examination; and it operated so well that it was not only adopted but greatly improved by succeeding dynasties, and continues in force at the present day. The Americans would as soon surrender their ballot-box, as the Chinese that noble system of literary competition, which makes public office the reward of scholarship, and gives every man an opportunity of elevating himself by his own exertions.

Nor are the Chinese less familiar with the idea of change in the region of religious thought. Three systems of religion have appeared on the arena of the empire, and struggled for ascendancy since the sixth century before the Christian era. Confucianism was persecuted under the dynasty of Ch'in; and Taoism and Buddhism alternately persecuting and persecuted, kept up a conflict for ages, each in turn seating its own disciples on the throne of the empire. The last of these is of foreign origin; and its universal prevalence does much to reconcile the people to the introduction of religious ideas from abroad; while it stands forth as a visible proof of the possibility of converting the Chinese to a foreign creed. A leading statesman* of China has made use of this as an argument to show that the emperor should not object to the propagation of Christianity. "From the time of Ch'in and Han," he says, "the doctrines of Confucius began to be obscured, and the religion of Buddha spread. Now Buddhism originated in India, but many of the Hindus have renounced Buddhism and embraced Mohammedan-

* Tseng Kuo Fan, viceroy of Nanking.

ism. The Roman Catholic faith originated in the West, but some nations of the West have adopted Protestantism, and set themselves in opposition to the faith of Rome. Whence we see that other religions rise and fall from age to age, but the doctrine of Confucius survives, unimpaired throughout all ages." The writer is careful to disavow any sympathy for Christianity, and he by no means recommends its adoption; but he wishes to assure His Majesty that there is no serious evil to be apprehended even if Christianity should succeed in supplanting Buddhism, as long as the people adhere to the cardinal doctrines of their ancient sage. It is a great thing for the leading minds to acknowledge the possibility of a change even in this hypothetical form.

Aside from these religious revolutions, and altogether distinct from them, are several periods of intellectual awakening, that constitute marked epochs in the history of literature.

The first of these was occasioned by the teachings of Confucius. Another occurred in the time of Mencius, a century later, when the ethical basis of the school underwent a searching revision, the great question of the original goodness or depravity of human nature being discussed with acuteness and power. A third and more powerful awakening took place, when the classic books which Lu Cheng had burned, rose, phoenix-like, from their ashes, or to speak more correctly, issued, Minerva-like, from the retentive brain of those venerable scholars who had committed them to memory in their early boyhood.

This was the age of criticism; the very circumstances which roused the national mind to activity, directed its efforts to the settlement of the text of their ancient records. But it did not stop here. Slips of bamboo, and tablets of wood, the clumsy materials of ancient books,

gave place to linen, silk, and paper. The convenience and elegance of the material contributed to multiply books and to stimulate literary labor.

But the grandest of all the revivals of learning, was, as might be expected, that which ensued on the discovery of the art of printing. In the period above referred to, about A. D. 177, the revised text of the sacred books was engraved on tablets of stone, by Imperial order, as a precaution to secure it against the danger of another conflagration. Impressions must have been taken from these, and the art of printing thus practiced to a limited extent at that early date; but it was not till the eighth century that it came into general use for the manufacture of books.

It was not so much the augmented rate of production that marked this epoch, as the improved character of its original literature. This was eminently the age of poetry; when Li Tai Po, and Tu Fu, and a whole constellation of lesser lights rose above the horizon. The Poems of T'ang are still recognized as forming the text-books of standard poetry.

This period was succeeded by another in the reign of the Sung dynasty (960-1279), when the mind of China exhibited itself in a new development. It became seized with a mania for philosophical speculation, and grappled with the deepest questions of ontology. Choutze, Chengtze, and, above all, the famous Chu Hsi, distinguished themselves by the penetrating subtlety and the daring freedom of their inquiries. Professing to elucidate the ancient philosophy, they in reality founded a new one—a school of pantheistic materialism, which has continued dominant to the present hour.

The last two dynasties have not been unfruitful in the products of the intellect; indeed, there seems to be no

end or abatement to the teeming fertility of the Chinese mind. Less daringly original than in the preceding period, it has yet, under each of these dynasties, appeared in a new style—the writers of the Ming being distinguished for masculine energy of expression, and those of the Ta Ch'ing for graceful elegance.

Enough has been said to show that the Chinese have not maintained through all the ages that character of cast-iron uniformity so generally ascribed to them. Worshipers of antiquity, they certainly are, and strongly conservative in their mental tendencies; but they have not been content, as is too commonly supposed, to hand down from the earliest times a small stock of crystallized ideas without increase or modification. The germs of their civilization, like those of any civilization worth preserving, are not precious stones to be kept in a casket, but seeds to be cultivated and improved. In fact, modifications have taken place on an extensive scale, foreign elements have from time to time been engrafted on the native root, and the native scholar, as he follows back the pathway of history, fails to discover anything like uniformity or constancy, except in a few of the most fundamental principles. The doctrine of filial piety, carried to the point of religious devotion, extends like a golden thread through all the ages, as the foundation of family ties and social order; while the principle of the divine origin of government, administered by one man as the representative of Heaven, and modified by the corresponding doctrine that the will of Heaven is expressed in the will of the people, is found alike in every period, as the basis of their civil institutions.

Though not so much given to change as their more mercurial antipodes, it is still true that the constant factors of their civilization have been few, and the varia-

ble ones many. Bold innovations and radical revolutions rise to view all along in the retrospect of their far-reaching past, and prepare them to anticipate the same for the future. With such antecedents, and such a character for intellectual activity, it would be next to impossible that they should not be profoundly affected by their contacts and collisions with the civilization of Christendom.

In point of fact the impression was profound, though it was not immediately apparent. For over half a century the West had been acting on China by the combined influence of its arms, its commerce, its religion, and its science. Some of these influences commenced to operate at a much earlier date, and their effects were by no means insignificant. But of late years all of them have been combined with an oxyhydrogen blow-pipe intensity, that one would think sufficient to melt a mountain of adamant. They could not, in the nature of things, have been brought to bear on China so effectively at any earlier period on account of her geographical isolation. The nations of the West were too remote to cause solicitude; but when steamships and the cutting of the Isthmus brought them nearer, and when in two wars they displayed their ability to beat her in every battle, they taught her a lesson, without which all attempts to benefit the Chinese must have proved like irrigating the side of a mountain by projecting water from its base.

The effect was immediate. The Chinese were for the first time convinced that they had something to learn. Within less than a year from the close of hostilities in 1860, large bodies of Chinese troops might have been seen learning foreign tactics under foreign drill-masters, on the very battle grounds where they had been defeated. Arsenals, well supplied with machinery from foreign countries, were put in operation at four important points,

and Navy Yards were established at two principal sea-ports, where native mechanics were taught the construction of steam gun-boats.

Such, indeed, was their proficiency in the arts of war, that they supposed themselves able to cope with a first-class power, until the war with Japan dispelled the illusion.

Nor was education in other lines wholly neglected. A school for the training of interpreters was opened in Canton, and a similar school established in the Capital. It is significant of the animus of the ruling race that in both schools the students were exclusively drawn from the Tartar tribes, or from Chinese whose families had been adopted into the Manchu race in the age of the conquest. The government was not desirous of extending the benefits of the new education to its Chinese subjects. One Manchu statesman there was, with sounder views and greater breadth—Wen Hsiang, the enlightened chief of the Board of Foreign Affairs. He induced the throne to open the doors of the College to Chinese who were high-class graduates in letters; but the haughty graduates declined to enter. Wojin, the Emperor's teacher, denounced the proposal to have her learned doctors sit at the feet of foreigners as derogatory to the dignity of China. Being at the head of the Imperial Academy, he encouraged the Hanlins in their opposition to such an innovation. Unable to reach the higher literati, Wen Hsiang had to content himself with recruits from lower grades. The number of scholarships was raised from thirty to one hundred and twenty, and the curriculum enlarged to embrace a liberal course in sciences and arts, as well as languages. The Imperial T'ung Wen College became an important factor in helping forward the cause of progress.

Some of its students found employment in schools and arsenals. Many of them were attached to embassies in foreign parts, and two of them had the distinguished honor of becoming tutors in English to His Majesty, the Emperor, then in his early minority. Instead of printed books, they were required to place in the hands of their Imperial pupil, a series of lessons written out in beautiful manuscript. These they always brought to me to be sure that they were correct. I may here mention that my first appointment in connection with the T'ung Wen College, was the charge of a class of boys, ten in number, who were studying English. After a short time, I proposed to give up the charge. An aged minister, who had the oversight of the school, inquiring my reason for resigning, I told him I thought the business too small for me.

"Don't call it small," he said, "some of your students may yet become teachers of the Emperor."

Needless to say, this argument proved conclusive; not only was his prophesy with reference to the students fulfilled, a prediction which he had a good deal to do in fulfilling, but, in the further enlargement of the institution, I was appointed to the Presidency in connection with the Chair of International Law, a two-fold position, which I continued to hold for twenty-five years, until ill-health compelled my resignation.

Our students, who went abroad in connection with embassies, were some of them interpreters, some secretaries, some consuls and vice-consuls, while one or two even rose to the dignity of minister plenipotentiary: notably was this the case with Mr. Ching Chang,* late minister to France.

* The late Marquis Tseng, Minister to England, though not a student of the College, took private lessons from me, and always manifested towards me the respect due to a teacher.



PRESIDENT W. A. P. MARTIN AND FACULTY OF CHINESE IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY

The embassies themselves must not be overlooked as an educational agency. Each minister and his suite regarded themselves as on a mission of exploration. Sometimes the minister embodied his observations in a set of volumes. More frequently their secretaries published an account of their travels. These publications, not being pigeon-holed like official reports, had the effect of doing much to awaken the reading class.

One of the most remarkable enterprises of that age was the educational mission originated by Mr. Yung Wing, a graduate and doctor of laws of Yale University. By him and his successors, about three hundred picked youth were led to Hartford for training in every branch of knowledge that could make them useful to their country. The mission was, as I have elsewhere stated, finally recalled, because it was thought these young men were learning too much.

The efforts hitherto made in this direction, were mainly official, and intended for the use of the Government. They were feeble in comparison with the strength of the movement which followed on the war with Japan. The first effect of defeat was to excite earnest inquiry as to the cause of China's humiliation. Those haughty scholars, the members of the Hanlin, who had disdained to enter the T'ung Wen College, now became convinced that the Japanese were victorious because a new education had supplied them with new sources of power. They began the organization of reform clubs in the capital and throughout the empire, in many places. They sought the advice of missionaries, such as Dr. Allen, the Rev. Timothy Richard, and the Rev. Gilbert Reid. They were encouraged by Viceroys and Governors. The Great Viceroy, Chang Chih Tung published a book to stimulate the movement, showing that a change of base for the educational system is "China's Only Hope."

In 1897, the eminent Cantonese scholar, Kang Yü Wei, went to the capital to compete for a place in the Imperial Academy. He won for himself a more distinguished position by getting the ear of the Emperor. Deeply penetrated with the conviction that China's safety required her to imitate the example of Japan, he fired the mind of the Emperor with enthusiasm to be the leader of his people in the path of reform.

The Emperor issued a series of decrees, all commending themselves to the judgment of reasonable men, but fraught with the spirit of innovation. He proposed, instead of choosing the employees of the government as the result of a competition in ornamental handwriting and verse making, to have them examined in sciences and practical arts. With this in view, he ordered the establishment of common schools, for which the idol temples in the provinces were to be thrown open, an act regarded by his people as equivalent to confiscation. He also ordered the creation of upper schools and colleges in the provinces, and established a University in the capital, which should gather in the provincial graduates and train them for the service of the state. The writer was called to the Presidency of this institution. It had been in operation for two years with a corps of ten foreign professors, and twelve native assistants, mostly Christian graduates of mission schools, when its operations were brought to a standstill by the Boxer outbreak.

That temporary madness which showed itself in the burning of the Hanlin Library, the destruction by fire of the richest sections of the capital, and the destruction by water of the library of our University, is sure to have the effect of giving a fresh impetus to the cause of educational reform.

BOOK I

China's Contribution to Arts and
Sciences

I

CHINESE DISCOVERIES

THAT a people whose history runs back almost as far as that of Egypt, and whose continuity has been far less disturbed by foreign conquest, should hit on many useful discoveries is not to be wondered at. The wonder is that so little pains have been taken to point out the extent of our indebtedness to the ancient civilization of the Far East. In many instances our obligations can be proven. In others, where the evidence is not conclusive, the fact of priority creates a presumption in favor of the Chinese. The channel of transmission may not be easy to detect; but there is no doubt that such existed even prior to the records of history, just as the ocean throbs with a common pulse, and secret currents connect its distant shores.

It might be difficult to show that the Chinese are distinguished for inventive talent, but intelligent and practical as they are, it is inevitable that in the course of ages they should accumulate a considerable stock of arts and of the rudiments of science. They are not wanting in originality, the political and social system under which we meet them at the dawn of history is obviously of native origin, and the traveler even at the present day is struck by the peculiar methods of the Chinese in much that goes to make up their material civilization.

We shall call attention chiefly (but not exclusively), to such discoveries and inventions as have made their way to the western world.

The author of the *Liao Chai*, a popular story book compiled about two centuries ago, describes a tube into which a message might be spoken and conveyed to a distant place, when on the removal of a seal the words become audible. I am not going to champion Chiang Hsien-shêng against Mr. Edison, as the inventor of a phonograph. His specifications are too few and vague to pass muster in our patent office. Like many anticipatory hints to be found in the literature of other countries this fanciful outline seems rather to indicate the consciousness of a want than to show the way in which the problem was to be solved.

Discarding fancy, we shall confine ourselves to solid ground, and after vindicating for the Chinese the honor of discovery in two or three important arts, we shall indicate in a few words what they have done in the less familiar domain of science.

I. 1. Gunpowder, which Sir James MacKintosh brackets together with printing as securing our civilization against another irruption of barbarians, is, in my opinion, to be set to the credit of the Chinese. The honor is contested by English, German, Arab and Hindu; nor is it impossible that the discovery may have been made independently by each. Its ingredients, sulphur, nitre and carbon, were in constant use by alchemists, and it was inevitable that the explosive force of the compound should be found out if only by accident—especially as no fixed proportion is required. The first to meet with this happy accident would be the Chinese, who were the first experimenters in the field of alchemy.*

The pretensions of Schwartz and Roger Bacon need not be discussed on account of their comparatively recent date. As for the Arabs, they were transmitters, not

* See chapter III.

inventors. The only people who can seriously compete with the Chinese are the Hindus. Their knowledge of gunpowder is certainly of great antiquity, but their ancient dates are difficult to fix, and the balance of evidence as to priority appears to be in favor of China.

One of the weightiest documents bearing on the question is a paper set for a metropolitan examination about twenty years ago. The answers given by the candidates would be of little worth; but the facts stated or assumed in the questions are of great value, emanating as they do from the chief examiner, one of the most learned men in the Empire.

“Fire-arms began with the use of rockets in the dynasty of Chou (B. C. 1122-255)—in what book do we first meet with the word *p'ao*, now used for cannon?”

“Is the defense of Kai Fêng Fu against the Mongols (1232) the first recorded use of cannon?”

“The Sung dynasty (A. D. 960-1278) had several varieties of small guns—what were their advantages?”

These three questions all relate to fire-arms. They imply an explosive, but it does not follow that such explosive was always employed to discharge projectiles. Indeed the rockets referred to can scarcely be reckoned as projectiles, being used for signals or for festive display, rather than as weapons of war. The famous siege referred to in the second question was more than a hundred years earlier than the first incontestable use of cannon in Europe (1338).

If we turn to the *Ko Chieh Ching Yuan*, “The Mirror of Research”, the best Chinese authority on the subject of invention, we obtain a little light on the transition from signal rockets to fire-arms properly so-called. The

author cites an ancient book to the effect that in 998 A. D. one Tang Fu produced a rocket of a new style having a head of iron,—proof that it was not intended for a mere signal or a *feu de joie*. He also cites another book which relates that in A. D. 1131 a piratical fleet on the River Yangtze was destroyed by a “thunder bomb”, secretly sent among the ships. The bomb made of paper was filled, he says, with sulphur and quicklime. As it rose to the sky with a report like thunder, it must have been launched from a mortar by the force of gunpowder.

He further quotes a statement that at a date not mentioned, but earlier than the defense of Kai Fêng Fu the walls of Hsi An, the ancient capital, were provided with cannon which went off with a report that could be heard thirty miles and spread flames over half an acre. The balls or bombs for these guns were made of iron, but porcelain was also used.

Goubel, cited by Pauthier, says that cannon throwing stones were used in the defense of T'ai Yuan, A. D., 767, and that mines were employed. He says no explosive is mentioned by the native author, its existence being taken as well-known.

2. China's claim to the discovery of the Mariner's Compass is uncontested. The magnet was known at an early epoch to both Greeks and Egyptians; the former gave it its name, and the latter, according to Plutarch, employed it as a symbol for a good man who not only attracts others but possesses the power of imparting his virtues. Yet the first to observe its directive properties were the Chinese. By them the polarity of the needle was utilized long before the Christian era. Some of their books assert that it was used to guide war-chariots across a desert as early as 2600 B. C., but the war is legendary and the assertion groundless. More within

range is their unvarying statement, that magnetic needles were given to ambassadors from a southern country to enable them to find their way home, 1100 B. C. Those ambassadors came by land, and from its use in their vehicles the compass came to be described as *Chih nan chü*, a "South-pointing chariot." A curious illustration of that primitive application of the needle may be seen any day in a small compass suspended in the sedan or cart of a Mandarin.

The use of the needle at sea follows as a matter of course. The Chinese employed it in coasting voyages as early as the fifth century A. D., and it is probable that their junks as well as their land carriages were provided with it long before that date. Its use was known in Europe as early as the twelfth century, and possibly much earlier, the crusades, which mingled all nations, having served to propagate the arts of the East—but it was slow in coming into vogue. In the bold hands of Columbus three centuries later it pointed the way to a new world. Yet Vasco da Gama seems to have made little or no use of it in his voyage to India in 1497, which was in fact a coasting voyage all the way. Camoens in his poetical narrative *Os Lusíadas*, though he praises the astrolabe and is ever on the alert for things marvellous and strange, makes no allusion to the needle.

3. That Gutenberg's invention of printing was prompted by the knowledge that something similar existed in China is next to certain. For seven hundred years the art had been practiced there, not in secret as he and Faustus practiced it, but as a great popular industry. Its origin is remarkable. A tyrant, determined to uproot the principles of Confucius, burned the books of the Sage. They were restored partly from memory, partly from imperfect copies found hidden in the wall of a house. The

Emperor Tai Tsung, (A. D. 627) resolved that the sacred inheritance should never again be exposed to destruction by fire, caused the books to be engraved on stone. That stone library is still extant. A hundred and seventy slabs of granite bearing on their faces the text of the thirteen classics may still be seen at Hsi An Fu, and a modern imitation of it stands in the old Confucian University at Peking.

No sooner was that Imperial edition completed than the idea occurred of making it accessible to scholars in all parts of the country by means of rubbings. That was printing. Nor in China has the form of that art greatly changed in the lapse of a thousand years. Wood has been substituted for stone and *relievo* for *intaglio*, making the page white instead of black, but the impressions are still rubbings, made with a soft brush and without the use of a press.

From the invention of block printing it was not long until attempts were made to print with divisible type, but they failed to supersede the primitive method, the Chinese not having hit on that happy alloy known as "printers' metal." It is not necessary to suppose that Chinese type of wood, copper or terra cotta found their way to Mayence; the smallest fragment of printed paper carried in a China vase or roll of silk would be sufficient to suggest the whole art to a mind like that of Gutenberg.

4. The art of making porcelain is so obviously Chinese in its origin that porcelain continues to bear the name of China ware.

5. The same may be said of the manufacture of silk. The name is somewhat disguised, but it is obviously derived from *Seres* the Latin for Chinese, through the adjective *sericum*, which dropping the final syllable becomes *serie*-silk, i. e., China stuff. I need not push the argument

so far as to assert that *ser* is Chinese for silkworm; though that derivation is not without plausibility. In the making of paper, not only were the Chinese far in advance of us—they preceded us in the special art of producing it from wood pulp. Paper was invented by China about the beginning of the Christian era; but for many centuries preceding their books were engraved on slips of bamboo with the point of a stile.

It is a curious fact that arts originating in China seem to require transplanting in order to attain a higher development. Witness the marvellous improvements made in the application of gunpowder, printing and the mariner's compass. This may be due to an inborn conservatism which makes the Chinese reluctant to alter the methods approved by their fathers.

II. The same observation may be made in regard to their essays in the field of science. Ideas which in their native soil have remained stunted and deformed yield a rich fruitage under a more genial sky.

1. Notably is this the case with Alchemy,* which in the western world has expanded into a vast body of science which, in no mean sense, fulfils its promise of transmuting baser elements into gold. In its native soil it continues to be an occult art laden with all the superstitions of the middle ages.

There is no other science for which we are indebted to China, but there are many in which the Chinese made a beginning at an epoch when Europe was still in a state of barbarism.

2. Astronomy. In this they made a good beginning twenty-two centuries before Christ. They had an astronomical board with regular professors, two of whom were put to death for failing, as some think, to foretell an

* See chap. III.

eclipse of the sun. Others, however, suppose that their offense was failing to solemnize the event with proper rites.

At that epoch they had fixed the length of the year more exactly than it was fixed by the Romans in the time of Numa. In their later astronomy Indian and Babylonian influences are conspicuous and we are unable to assign to them any credit beyond that of being good observers.

3. Mathematics. Decimal Arithmetic, we are told, was brought to Europe by the Arabs, along with what we still call the Arabic figures. That the Arabs obtained it from India requires no demonstration; but did it originate in India? Whether it passed from China to India or *vice versa* is not easy to determine. It is not very likely, however, that the Chinese would borrow it as early as 2600 B. C., when their chronological computation was adopted—a system in which it is manifestly involved. Their oldest arithmetic, the *Chou Pei*, proceeds upon it, and that dates, in part at least, from the Chou dynasty, whose name it bears, 1125 B. C.

Not a little remarkable is it that this venerable book contains a treatise on right-angled triangles, bearing the name of Chou Kung, the founder of the House of Chou. Trigonometry as it appeared in Europe is ascribed to the Hindus, but with them it dates from the Greek invasion, having been developed from the Geometry of the Greeks. Of Algebra the Chinese possess an original form called *Tien Yuan*, which though not found in any book earlier than A. D. 1247, gives signs of being of indigenous growth. The words *Tien* and *Yuan* are equivalent to x and y signs for unknown quantities.

4. Physics. Ether, that mysterious substance which of late has forced itself on the attention of our philosophers as a necessary postulate, was known to the

Chinese a thousand years ago. It is, says Professor Lodge, "The simplest conception of the Universe that has yet occurred to the mind of man—one continuous substance filling all space, which can vibrate as light, which can be parted into positive and negative electricity, which in whirls or vortices constitutes matter, and which transmits by continuity, not by impact, every action and reaction of which matter is capable—this is the modern view of ether and its functions."

This conception, as I shall show in the next chapter, is not new to the philosophers of China. How early it appeared there it is not easy to affirm—perhaps eleven centuries before our era, when the earliest speculations on the forces of nature were embodied in the *I Ching*, or "Book of Changes." It is found as a full-fledged doctrine in several writers of the eleventh century of our era, who not only speak of an ethereal medium, but ascribe to it all the properties above enumerated, except that of producing electricity.

The word Ether is Greek, but our scientific use of it is essentially Chinese. That we borrowed the idea from China I will not assert, but it is easy to point out a way by which it might have passed into Europe. The author of the modern theory of ether is René Descartes. Educated at the Jesuit Seminary of La Flèche in France, who can prove that he did not there meet with fragments of Chinese philosophy in the writings of Jesuit missionaries?

5. If the Chinese had the Cartesian philosophy before Descartes, it is equally true that they understood the Baconian method before Bacon. They knew the doctrine only to reject it, as did Descartes at a later date. Even such general ideas as that of Biological Evolution, and that of the conservation of energy, they appear to have apprehended with great clearness, but they never took the

trouble to fortify them by the laborious process of systematic induction. Says Mencius, "The study of nature has for its object to get at the causes of things. In causes the ground principle is advantage. Tho' heaven is high, and sun and stars are far away, if we could find out the causes of their phenomena, we might sit still and calculate the solstice of a thousand years."

In this remarkable speech uttered 400 B. C. he shows that he knew how to set about the study of nature. It might perhaps be going too far to affirm, that in speaking of "advantage" as a fundamental principle in natural causes, he anticipated the author of *The Origin of Species*; yet this obscure hint, if followed up, might have led to Darwin's doctrine.

As most of the points under this last head are treated in the next chapter, I bring the enumeration to a close by inquiring why the Chinese failed to profit by their discoveries? The answer is brief but decided: In the arts, the slavish habit of following in the footsteps of their fathers acted as a bar to improvement. In the sciences, progress was rendered impossible by a system of state education which made the ancient classics the only basis of public instruction.

II

CHINESE SPECULATION IN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

THE term speculative philosophy* is a little hazy; perhaps, however, not more so than the thing indicated. It represents an early stage of thought prior to the rise of physical science—may we not add prior to, and for the most part in neglect of, that logic whose office it is to analyze the process of reasoning and to fix the limits of knowledge?

Irregular and haphazard as it has shown itself in most countries, it is not inaptly described by the word speculation, as understood in business transactions. Why is it that the speculator in the stock market may, as by the cast of a die, achieve fortune or provoke ruin? Is it not because the unknown and the variable are elements that elude his grasp? Yet the element of uncertainty is precisely that which contributes most to the fascination of his ventures. Has it not been the same with most of those early thinkers who have undertaken to explain the mystery of existence?

When the pole of which they are in search is hedged about by frozen seas, what wonder if their happiest efforts have not been rewarded by complete success? Yet has the pursuit of truth in those regions and in all ages been justly regarded as the most ennobling occupation of the human mind. Nor has it been barren of results. Would

* This chapter is included under the head of Science, notwithstanding the word Philosophy in its title, because it deals chiefly with the study of nature.

it not be a surprise to find that Chinese explorers in these high latitudes have planted their standard nearer to the pole than those of most other nations?

To show what they have accomplished, I shall not deem it necessary to trace their philosophy, even in outline, from the dawn of speculation, but shall select a period when their speculative thought was most active and when the now dominant philosophy was formulated. Of the forty centuries included in the records of the Chinese Empire, there is one century, and no other, that can be selected as preëminently the age of philosophy. This was at the beginning of the Sung dynasty (1020 to 1120 A. D.), when gross darkness brooded over Europe and when the western world was convulsed by the Crusades. Earlier dynasties had been distinguished by various forms of intellectual activity,—one by the invention of political systems, one by historical writings, one for poetry and the drama, etc.,—but not until this epoch did the Chinese mind evince a disposition to question everything in heaven and earth. In the work of setting anew the foundations of faith and knowledge, five men took the lead, whose family names (two being brothers) fall curiously into an alliterative line of four syllables,—Chou, Chang, Cheng, Chu,—all so distinguished that they may be compared with a Pleiad cluster, a constellation (and are there not many such?) whose light has not yet reached our shores. The last named is by far the most celebrated. Not more original than the others, he combined the qualities of a laborious scholar and an acute thinker, and knew how to gather the scattered rays of his predecessors into a focus. Though shining in part by borrowed light, Chu Hsi looms up like a pharos, taking (after Confucius and Mencius) the third place among the great teachers of the Chinese people. All five were Confucian scholars, but there can



DR. MARTIN AND SOME OF HIS STUDENTS

be no doubt that their mental activity was stimulated and its direction determined by the speculations of Buddhist and Taoist writers. Their writings derive immense importance from the fact that for five hundred years, since the publication by imperial authority of the great *Encyclopædia of Philosophy*, they have been accepted by the government as the standard of orthodoxy to which all who aspire to the honors of the civil-service examinations are expected to conform. Their views are therefore to be taken as the views of the educated men of the China of to-day.

In their mode of philosophizing they resemble Descartes more than Bacon. Their method is *a priori*, and, like the great Frenchman who had read Bacon and rejected his doctrine, they adopted theirs, not through ignorance of the experimental method, but from choice. Confucius himself had laid down the maxim that "knowledge comes from the study of *things*," a maxim which seems as much out of place in his pages as that fine aphorism which sets forth the value of experiment does in those of Plato: *ἐμπειρία ποιεῖ τὸν αἰῶνα ἡμῶν πορεύεσθαι κατὰ τέχνην*, *πειρία δὲ κατὰ τύχην*.*

The Chinese assert that their sage wrote a treatise on the experimental study of nature, but that it was lost, and this fact they offer as an excuse for the backwardness of their country in that department of science. Descartes's preference for the deductive method sprang from his mathematical genius. On the part of the Chinese it was due to a desire to follow what they considered the order of nature. Both esteemed it most rational to do as Stanley did in exploring the Congo—to strike the stream at its

* Experiment (or experience, for in Greek as in French the word means both) causes the world to go forward in a scientific way; the want of it, in a haphazard manner.—*Gorgias*.

head and follow it down to the sea—rather than with Bacon to enter the mouth and creep slowly upward against the current. Which is the more daring feat, and which the more certain method, needs not to be pointed out. To compare the two methods and define the province of each, does not belong to our present theme. Suffice it to say that the champions of the one not infrequently made use of the other. When the Baconian got hold of a great principle, he did not fail to deduce its consequences; nor, on the other hand, did a Cartesian neglect to appeal to experiment. With the former experiment preceded discovery; with the latter it was employed to confirm conclusions.

Practical as the Chinese mind confessedly is, it is not a little remarkable that in the study of nature Chinese philosophers have never made extensive use of the inductive method. That they have not been unacquainted with it is evident from the following questions and answers found in the writings of the brothers Cheng:

“One asked whether, to arrive at a knowledge of nature, it is necessary to investigate each particular object; or may not some one thing be seized upon from which the knowledge of many things may be derived?”

“The Master replied: ‘A comprehensive knowledge of nature is not so easily acquired. You must examine one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow, and when you have accumulated a store of facts, your knowledge will burst its shell and come forth into fuller light, connecting all the particulars by general laws.’”

In view of this lucid response of one of their great oracles, who can deny that the Chinese had a clear conception of the inductive method five hundred years before Bacon? But, as Channing says, “Great men are not so much distinguished by difference of ideas, as by different

degrees in the impression made by the same idea." Contrast with this a dictum of Chang, the second of the five: "To know nature, you must *first* know Heaven. If you have pushed your science so far as to know Heaven, then you are at the source of all things. Knowing their evolution you can tell what ought to be, and what ought not to be, without waiting for anyone to inform you." The former statement made no impression on the Chinese mind, while the latter is universally regarded as its guiding star. How different must have been the history of the world had Chinese thinkers, instead of seeking for a short cut to universal knowledge, been content to study one thing at a time, with a view to "connecting all the particulars by general laws."

In accordance with the principle so confidently enunciated, Chang and his followers (and his predecessors as well) have directed their main attack to the problems of cosmogony, believing that they might thereby arrive at the "source of all things." Tomes are filled with conjectures and reasonings which it would be unprofitable to follow out in detail. The results, however, if I may so call them, which they reached by a sort of happy guess work, are not unworthy of notice, forming as they do the philosophical creed of educated China.

Stimulated, as I have said, by the speculations of Buddhist and Taoist schools, they took care to follow neither; and betray the influence of these sectaries chiefly by the pains they are at to steer a middle course between the two. To the one school, mind is the only entity, and matter a deceptive figment of the imagination; to the other, matter is the sole essence, and mind one of its products. Each inculcated a species of monism. The thinkers of the Sung dynasty, combining these one-sided conceptions, boldly assert a dualism in nature, and fix on *li* and *ch'i*,

force and matter, as the seminal principles of the universe.*

Is it not a little startling to find them at that early date hitting on a generalization which to us appears among the late results of modern science? Yet we shall see as we advance that this is not the only instance in which their unscientific speculations have anticipated the teachings of modern science.

Both terms in their dual formula require elucidation. Of the two principles, one is active, the other passive. I have rendered *li* by the word "force," as being active, but it is not mere force. The word signifies a principle of order, a law of nature. It is often synonymous with *Tao*, "reason," answering to the Greek *logos*. When Chu Hsi says that "heaven is *li*," he evidently means that the prime force in the universe is reason,—exactly the position maintained by the Taoists, though they use *Tao*, and not *li*, to express the idea. With both, this reason, if we may so call it, is rather a property of mind than mind itself. Each denies its personality, not perceiving that a property implies a substance, and that in this case the substance must be mind.

Ch'i, the second term of the formula, being passive, is matter. In popular use, however, it is limited to matter in a gaseous form and in these philosophical speculations it means primordial matter. Hear what they say of it:

In a treatise called *Cheng Mêng* "Right Discipline for Youth," Chang, with a thoroughness characteristic of the Chinese, begins with the origin of the universe. "The immensity of space, though called the great void," he says,

* They profess to derive their doctrines from the *I Ching*, the Chinese Genesis—and so do the Taoists. It is surprising with what skill each school succeeds in reading its tenets into that ancient text, parts of which are referred to B. C. 2800!

"is not void. It is filled with a subtile substance. In fact, there is no such thing as a vacuum." Now what is this omnipresent "subtile substance?" If we compare the descriptions of it given by these writers, we cannot resist the conclusion that it is ether; not the ether of the Greeks, the burning air, the empyrean, but the all-pervading ether of our modern science. It is the stuff out of which matter was produced. This is now a familiar idea, not of science, but of scientific speculation. It is set forth with special fullness in a work on the unseen universe, by those eminent professors, P. G. Tate and Balfour Stewart, along with the correlative doctrine of the reversion of matter to its primitive state.

Our Chinese philosophers taught the same thing centuries ago. What says the author of *Right Discipline*? His words are: "Within the immensity of space matter is alternately concentrated and dissipated, much as ice is congealed or dissolved in water." Not merely do they antedate these English writers in making it the source of matter, they seem to have hit on the dynamical theory of the molecule, and particularly on vortex motion, as the process of transformation. Chou, a contemporary of Chang, is known as the author of a diagram of cosmogony. He begins with a ring or circle of uniform whiteness, representing the primitive uniform ether. Then follows a circle partly dark, which shows the original substance differentiated into two forms, or rather forces, called *Yin* and *Yang*. Speaking of this diagram, "It shows," says Chu, the great expositor of the Chinese canonical books, "how the primitive void is transformed into matter." The two forces, *mo lai mo ch'ü*, grind back and forth, like millstones, in opposite directions, and the detritus resulting from their friction is what we call matter."

Perhaps the most striking point in this Chinese cosmogony is the account it gives of the creation of light. *T'ai ch'i tung erh sheng yang*. "The primal essence moved, and light was born." That the mode of motion was vibratory they also conjectured, but I do not assert that they ever carried their researches so far as to measure the length of a luminiferous wave, a performance which may now be witnessed any day in our physical laboratories. The Occidental theory of the ether and its functions is confirmed by a magnificent array of scientific facts; the Oriental theory, standing apart from experimental science, never emerged from the state of speculation; a speculation wonderfully acute and sublime, in which the scientific imagination shows itself to the best advantage, divining as if by instinct great truths which require for their confirmation the slower process of patient investigation. Nor must we forget that in the West this theory existed in the state of a discarded speculation for at least two centuries before it received the seal of science.

The first European to get a glimpse of the circumambient ocean was René Descartes. His mistake in referring the motions of the planets to whirlpools of ether brought discredit on his whole system, notwithstanding the fact that he also held that minute vortices were necessary to explain the constitution of matter. But what a glorious resurrection awaited it! In the last year of the eighteenth century, touched literally by a sunbeam, it woke from its long slumber. Young found it necessary to the hypothesis of undulations, to which he was led by the interference of rays, and Fresnel resorted to it to explain the phenomena of polarization. If this revival enhances the respect with which we regard the "father of modern philosophy," should it not also reflect a little luster on

those early thinkers of the far East who made the Cartesian ether the basis of their cosmogony?

Two or three doctrines that have played a great part in the intellectual movements of our age remain to be noticed as having been long ago propounded by the speculative philosophers of China. That they should have some conception of an evolutionary process in nature is not to be wondered at. What but a most thoroughgoing doctrine of evolution is to be expected from men who begin with the evolution of matter? The original unity of matter, suggested by modern researches in molecular physics, we may remark, was assumed in all of their cosmological speculations. What the eminent physicist, J. W. Draper, says of the alchemists of Europe is true in a still higher degree of those of China, who led the way, both in speculation and investigation. "They were the first to seize the grand idea of evolution in its widest extent as a progress from the imperfect to the more perfect in lifeless as well as living nature, in an increasing progression in which all things take part toward a higher and nobler state." This view is prominent in the writings of many of the philosophers of ancient China.

Here is a statement from the works of one of the Cheng brothers, which shows that they came very near to the doctrine of the conservation of energy. He says: "Body in motion is force. Its contact with another is followed by a reaction or effect. This effect in turn acts as a force producing another effect, and so on without end." "Here," he adds, "is a vast subject for the student of philosophy." The Chinese "students of philosophy" have not troubled themselves to verify this, any more than other shrewd guesses of their predecessors. The remark, however, which Chu makes on this passage shows a comprehensive grasp of the idea. "Heaven and earth," he

says, "with all they contain, are nothing but transformations of one primitive force."

In conclusion, the cosmogony of our Chinese philosophers is by no means so atheistic as it might appear. True, Chu Hsi, the authorized expounder of their system, says: "We must beware of thinking that there is a *man* up in the sky, who controls the motion of the universe." But he does not deny that there is a power at work whose nature is inscrutable. Says Chang, the most daring of the five: "The great void is filled with a pure or perfect fluid. Since it is perfectly fluid, it offers no obstruction to movement" (*i. e.*, it neither impedes motion nor is its proper motion impeded). "There being no obstruction [*i. e.*, nothing to bring about a change of state], a divine force converts the pure into the gross." To explain the creation of matter, he invokes, though reluctantly, the intervention of a *divine* power. Is it not what Horace calls *Nodus tali vindice dignus*?

That our Chinese thinkers meant God in a proper sense, I will not affirm, but they considerably leave room for him. Have we not seen that one of the dual principles postulated by them is invested with some of the "attributes of mind?" They dogmatize about self-acting laws, but there is reason to expect that another generation will come to understand that law implies mind, and will proclaim with Emerson that

"Conscious law is King of kings."

To them our Western school of agnosticism is, as yet unknown. In that line, too, they are in advance of us by several centuries. But *their* agnosticism is of a milder type than ours. It is not aggressive, neither is it so bigoted as not to be open to conviction. It is, moreover, as the Occidental is not, profoundly reverential. For this

habit of mind it is indebted to Confucius, who, to wean his people from debasing forms of idolatry, employed for the Supreme Being the vague term Heaven, and discouraged them from prying into those transcendental mysteries hidden by the veil of blue. He believed, however, in a moral government, and so do all his followers to this day. He ascribed to the object of his reverence more of personality than they are willing to admit. "The superior man," he said, "fears three things, and the first is Heaven." "With what words does Heaven speak to us?" he asks again. "The seasons run their rounds, and animal and vegetable life displays itself in a hundred forms. These are the language of Heaven." He approaches far nearer to the Christian idea of God than the negations of Buddha, or the metamorphoses of Taoism; and there is reason to hope that his disciples will come back to the mental attitude of their great master, which has been somewhat obscured by later speculations. To bring them back, and to carry them beyond it, they require, above all things, a truer logic and a juster psychology than they have ever possessed.*

Happy will it be for China when those who control the opinions of the people learn, in that vague Power of which they stand in awe, to recognize the *Pater Mundi*.

* With a view to meeting this demand, I prepared three years ago, in Chinese, a volume on *Christian Psychology*, which was introduced to the Chinese world by a preface from the pen of Li Hung Chang, and published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

III

'ALCHEMY IN CHINA, THE SOURCE OF CHEMISTRY

"The search itself rewards the pains;
So though the chymist his great secret miss,
For neither it in art nor nature is,
Yet things well worth his toil he gains,
And does his charge and labor pay,
With good unsought experiments by the way."

—COWLEY.

ONE in their etymological origin, the words Alchemy and Chemistry describe different stages in the progress of the same science. The former represents it in its infancy, nursed on the bosom of superstition; its field of vision limited to special objects, and vainly striving to accomplish the impossible. The latter presents it in its maturity, when, emancipated from puerile fancies, it claims the realm of nature for its domain, and the laws of matter as its proper study.

A glance at alchemy as practiced in the West will be necessary to prepare us for understanding the rôle it has played in the distant Orient.

In its earlier stage it acknowledged no other aim than the pursuit of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. In its more advanced state it renounces them both, yet it secures substantial advantages of scarcely inferior magnitude, alleviating disease and prolonging life by the improvements it has introduced into the practice of medicine; while by the mastery it gives us over the elements

of nature it surpasses the most sanguine expectations of its early votaries.

Those early votaries, whether they lived and labored in the West or East, should not be forgotten. They were the intrepid divers who explored the bottom of the stream, and laid the foundation for those magnificent arches on which modern science has erected her easy thoroughfare. Like coral insects, "building better than they knew," they toiled upward in the midst of darkness, guided only by a faint glimmer of the light, but without any conception of the extent and richness of the new world of knowledge that was destined to spring from their ill-directed labors. Heirs of the world's experience, and themselves daring experimenters, we need not be surprised to find them in possession of a large mass of empirical information.*

The old Arabian Geber,† as early as the eighth century, was acquainted with the preparation of sulphuric acid and aqua regia, and gave an elaborate description of the more useful metals. He was a chemist; if A. Von Humboldt is right in saying that "Chemistry begins when men have learned to employ mineral acids and powerful solvents."

In the twelfth century, Albertus Magnus‡ understood

* Cowley expresses this idea in the verses prefixed to this essay, which, it must be confessed, contain more truth than poetry.

† From his name comes *gibberish* much as *dunce* comes from Duns Scotus.

‡ Humboldt speaks of Albertus Magnus as "an independent observer in the domain of analytical chemistry;" and adds, "It is true that his hopes were directed to the transmutation of metals, but in his attempts to fulfil this object he not only improved the practical manipulation of ores, but also enlarged the insight of men into the general mode of action of the chemical forces of nature."

the cupellation of gold and silver, and their purification by means of lead, as also the preparation of caustic potassa, ceruse, and minium.

In the thirteenth, Roger Bacon described with accuracy the properties of saltpetre, giving the recipe for gunpowder, and approaching very nearly to the explanation of the functions of air in combustion.

In the same century, Raymond Lully described the process of obtaining the essential oils; and, a little later, Basil Valentine obtained copper from blue vitriol by the use of iron; and discovered antimony, sulphuric ether, and fulminating gold. Isaac de Hollandais fabricated gems and described the process. Brandt, while analyzing a human body in quest of the philosopher's stone, stumbled on the discovery of phosphorus.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, Paracelsus did much to overthrow the inert methods of the Galenists, and gained a great and well-deserved reputation by introducing the use of mineral medicines, i. e. of chemical compounds.* This last-named individual, though among its more modern professors, may be taken as the very best type of the so-called science of alchemy, whether in its wisdom or its folly, in the absurdity of its pretensions or in the solid value of its actual achievements. His name, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastes Paracelsus von Hohenheim, is synonymous with charlatan; and his fate sadly illustrates the history of his profession, which one of his fellow-laborers describes as "beginning in deceit, progressing with toil, and ending in beggary."

* "With the rise of the Spagyrist and Paracelsus, who taught that the true use of chemistry is not to make gold, but medicines, we seem to perceive the first attempt at a rational pursuit of the study" (review of article "Chemistry" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; *Nature*, January, 1877.)

His life was terminated, like those of so many professed adepts, by imbibing a draught of his own elixir.* Nor was Paracelsus the last victim of this bewitching delusion. In 1784, Dr. Price, an English physician, after having made gold in the presence of several persons, and presented some of the precious product to George III., on being examined by a scientific commission, committed suicide to escape the shame of exposure.

Alchemy is not exclusively an old-world delusion. It crossed the ocean in the Mayflower along with witchcraft.

"One of the most curious things revealed to us in these volumes (of voyages)" says Mr. Lowell, "is the fact that John Winthrop Jr., was seeking the philosopher's stone."

In Jonathan Brewster, we have a specimen (of a different kind). Is it not curious that there should have been a *balneum morial* at New London, two hundred years ago? that *la recherche de labiolu* should have been going on there in a log hut under constant fear that the Indians would put out, not merely the flower of one little life, but rob the world of this divine secret.†

Dr. Barnard, "the diamond-maker of Sacramento," with his feet on the auriferous dust of California, sacrificed his life a few years ago in the vain attempt to manufacture something more precious than gold. Charging

* Of martyrs of science of this description, no country can show a longer catalogue than China. It may be found *in extenso* in native polemics against the Taoist religion, or scattered through the pages of the national histories. It will be sufficient here to refer to the Emperors Mu Tsung (A. D. 825), and Wu Tsung (A. D. 847), of the T'ang dynasty, both of whom are said to have shortened their lives by drinking a pretended elixir of immortality.

† Among My Books, pp. 253, 256.

a hollow sphere with the costly ingredients, which, on the application of fire, were to crystallize into diamonds, he was blown into the air by a premature explosion, and died without revealing the secret of which he believed himself to be the sole depositary.*

In Germany a *Societas Hermetica* existed as late as the year 1819; and this suggests a suspicion that the race of alchemists may not yet be altogether extinct, even among us. In fact the papers tell us of a man, who, in Canada, in 1877, committed suicide for the avowed purpose of testing the virtues of a restorative elixir which he professed to have invented. By the side of his lifeless corpse a letter was found directing that "a few particles of my '*creative all-changeeful essence*' be scattered over my remains, when the elements will resolve themselves into a new combination, and I will reappear a living evidence of the truth of this new discovery." If these are the words of a madman, they are those of one whose brain was turned by the study of alchemy. A large bottle containing the elixir was found standing by the letter. If this poor fellow was the last to offer himself as a sacrifice to the Moloch of alchemy, the last alchemist who succeeded in victimizing the public was Count Cagliostro, who, after vending his "elixir of immortal youth" in most of the courts of Europe, closed his career in a papal prison in 1795.†

* His melancholy history was given at length under the title of "The Diamond-maker of Sacramento," some years ago, in the *Overland Monthly*, a spirited magazine of San Francisco, successfully edited by the poet Bret Harte, and the Hon. B. P. Avery, late U. S. Minister at Peking. Against the possibility of making large transparent crystals of pure carbon, modern chemistry has never undertaken to pronounce; the ancient and unsuccessful diamond makers, however, were not chemists but alchemists.

† *Scientific American*, March 31, 1877.

In China, the hermetic art still flourishes in full vigor. The Abbé Huc, in his History of Christianity in China, relates an amusing incident illustrating the ardor with which these persevering Orientals still continue to pursue the golden phantom. When the missionaries established themselves in Chao Ch'ing, in Canton province, a company of educated natives possessed of considerable means were busily engaged in seeking to solve the problem of ages. A servant of the missionaries hinted to them that those learned Europeans were already in possession of it. Believing his assertion, they began to load him with favors to induce him to obtain the secret, for their advantage. They gave him fine clothes, and furnished him with money to hire handsome apartments and purchase a beautiful wife; while he, on his part, was in no haste to fulfil his engagement. He was only waiting for the Western sphinxes to open their lips. But the patience of his generous victims finally gave out; or, what is more probable, they learned from the missionaries that they had no such secret to communicate. To escape their vengeance, the crafty rogue was compelled to fly to a neighboring city, where he ended his days in a prison.

If the Chinese are the last to surrender this pleasing delusion, *there is good reason to believe that they deserve the more honorable distinction of being the first to originate the idea.*

The origin of an idea so fruitful in results is a question of great interest; and many writers have expended on it the resources of their learning. Some find it in the mythology of the Greeks, maintaining (an interpretation older than the Christian era) that the golden fleece sought for by the Argonauts was merely a sheepskin on which was inscribed the secret of making gold;* and this fancy

* This construction of the legend comes from Dionysius of Mitylene, who lived circa B. C. 50.

derives, it must be confessed, a little support from the circumstance that Medea is represented as possessed of the corresponding secret of perpetuating or restoring youth, having cut to pieces and reconstructed her aged father-in-law.

Some, again, discover the origin of the idea in Egypt, the land of Thoth (Hermes Trismegistus), and allege, in corroboration of their view, that the ancient Egyptians possessed considerable skill in practical chemistry. But the advocates of its Egyptian origin are not able to trace it back further than the time of the Ptolemies, and students of Hindu literature maintain that the Indians possessed a knowledge of it long before that date, though it must not be forgotten that there is nothing more uncertain than the chronology of ancient India.*

Others adduce conclusive proof to show that modern Europe received it from the Arabs. They have not, however, shown that the Arabs were its authors; and seem scarcely to have entertained a suspicion that those wandering sons of the desert, like birds and bees, were nothing more than agents through whom a prolific germ was conveyed from some portion of the remoter East. What that portion is, the name of Avicenna, one of the most eminent of the Arabian scholars, might have served to suggest, if they had followed the leading of words as carefully as a certain erudite Orientalist† who not only finds in India the origin of the doctrines of Pythagoras, but recognizes his name under the disguise of Budd-

* Some instructive disclosures on this subject may be found in a lecture of the late Cardinal Wiseman entitled "Early History." It has been asserted by those who claim to be well versed in the history of India that in that country the earliest date that can be considered historical is April, B. C. 327, the date of its invasion by Alexander the Great.

† Pococke, Greece in India.

haguru! For what is Avicenna but Ebn-Cinna? And what is Ebn-Cinna or Ibn Sina, as it is sometimes written, but a "Son of China?"—a designation assumed by the learned physician probably because he was born at Bokhara, on the confines of the Chinese Empire!

If we were as ready to rest in etymologies as the above-cited Orientalist, who triumphantly concludes a chapter with that curious derivation of the name of Pythagoras, we might consider our point as carried. Our etymology is, to say the least, as good as his; but we let it go for what it is worth, and rest our argument on better evidence.*

* Nothing is more fallacious than the attempt to identify words in different languages by means of a mere superficial resemblance. Some years ago, in reading the *Amour Médecin* of Molière, I fancied I had detected a translation in a combined form of the most familiar names for *tan* the Chinese elixir of life. The word *orviétan*, which is made so conspicuous in one of the scenes, describes a mysterious panacea, whose virtues the vender vaunts in strains as pompous as those of the Chinese alchemist. It struck me at once that, setting aside the accent, which goes for nothing in etymology, it might be taken as expressing golden elixir, and elixir of long life. Littré and the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* decided against me, referring the word to the old city of Orvieto (*urbs vetus*). But, whatever the source of the name, so exactly to the thing itself answers Chinese *tan*, or elixir, that I cannot forbear quoting a few lines descriptive of its qualities.

"*Sganarelle*. Monsieur, je vous prie de me donner une boîte de votre orviétan, que je m'en vais vous payer.

"*L'Opérateur* (chantant).

L'or de tous les climats qu'entoure l'Océan,

Peut-il jamais payer ce secret d'importance?

Mon remède guérit, par sa rare excellence,

Plus de maux qu'on n'en peut nombrer dans tout un an :

La gale, La rogne, La teigne, La fièvre, La peste, La goutte,

Vérole, Descente, Rougeole.

O grande puissance

De l'orviétan!"

It is not improbable, as we shall attempt to show, that the true cradle of alchemy was China—a country in which one of the oldest branches of the human family began their career of experience; a country in which we discover so many of the seeds of our modern art; germs which, dwarfed and stunted in their native climate, have only been made to flourish by a change of soil. To establish this would be an interesting contribution to the history of science; and it might perhaps lead us to take an optimistic view even of the sins and follies of mankind, to discover that our modern chemistry, which is now dropping its mature fruits into the hands of Western enterprise, had its root in the religion of Tao the most extravagant of the superstitions of the East.

We shall briefly sketch the rise and development of alchemy in China, and then conclude by comparing it with the leading phases of the same pursuit as exhibited in Western countries.

Originating at the least six hundred years before the Christian era,* the religion of Tao still exerts a powerful influence over the mind of the Chinese. This is not the place to discuss either its sober tenets or its wild fantasies, but there is one of its doctrines that connects it

The reader may compare this with passages quoted in the sequel from Taoist books.

N. B.—*Or*, in the first line of the description, is an evident allusion to the first syllable of the name, which the vendor takes to mean “golden.”

* It is indigenous to China; and though we are unable to trace it to an earlier date, there is good reason to believe that it is as old as the Chinese race. The connection of alchemy with Taoism did not escape the notice of the earlier Jesuit missionaries; but the Rev. Dr. Edkins, in a paper on Taoism published about forty years ago, was the first, I believe, to suggest a Chinese origin for the alchemy of Europe.

closely with our present subject. It looks on the soul as only a more refined form of matter; regards the soul and body as identical in substance, and maintains the possibility of preventing their dissolution by a course of physical discipline. This is the seed-thought of Chinese alchemy; for this materialistic notion it was that first led the disciples of Laotze to investigate the properties of matter.

Its development is easy to trace. Man's first desire is long life—his second is to be rich. The Taoist commenced with the former, but was not long in finding his way to the latter. As it was possible by physical discipline to lengthen the period of life, he conceived that the process might be carried far enough to result in corporeal immortality, accompanied by a mastery of matter and all its potencies. The success of the process, though, like the quest of the Holy Grail, involving moral qualifications, depended mainly on diet and medicine; and in quest of these he ransacked the forest, penetrated the earth, and explored distant seas. The natural longing for immortality was thus made, under the guidance of Taoism, to impart a powerful impulse to the progress of discovery in three departments of science—botany, mineralogy, and geography. Nor did the other great object of pursuit remain far in the rear. A few simple experiments, such as the precipitation of copper from the oil of vitriol by the application of iron, and the blanching of metals by the fumes of mercury, suggested the possibility of transforming the baser metals into gold.* This

* Science is not opposed to the abstract theory of transmutation. Indeed, the modern chemist has been led by the phenomena of allotropy and isomerism, not to speak of other considerations, almost to accept as a principle what he lately denounced as a groundless assumption of his ancient forerunner—

brought on the stage another, and, if possible, a more energetic, motive for investigation. The bare idea of acquiring untold riches by such easy means inspired with a kind of frenzy minds that were hardly capable of the loftier conception of immortality. It had, moreover, the effect of directing attention particularly to the study of minerals, the most prolific field for chemical discovery.

Whether in the vegetable or the mineral kingdom, the researches of the Chinese alchemists were guided by one simple principle—the analogy of man to material nature. As in their view the soul was only a more refined species of matter, and was endowed with such wondrous powers, so every object in nature, they argued, must be possessed of a soul, an essence or spirit, which controls its growth and development—a something not unlike the *essentia quinta* of Western alchemy. This they believed to be the case, not only with animals, which display some of the

viz., that a fundamental unity underlies many, if not all of, the forms of matter. On this subject see two interesting papers in the volume of *Nature* for 1879 (pp. 593, 625) on the question "Are the Elements Elementary?" The writer speaks approvingly of the hypothesis of *original* matter having a molecular or atomic structure; all the molecules being uniform in size and in shape, but not all possessed of the same amount of motion—the difference of their motions giving rise to all the properties of the various elements. The speculation which resolves matter into force tends in the same direction. "I must confess," says Professor Cook, "that I am rather drawn to that view of nature which has favor with many of the most eminent physicists of the present time, and which sees in the Cosmos, besides mind, only two essentially distinct beings—namely, matter and energy; which regards *all matter as one*, and all energy as one; and which refers the qualities of substances to the affections of the *one substratum modified by the varying play of forces*" (Lectures on the New Chemistry, lecture iv., International Series).

attributes of mind, but with plants, which extract their appropriate nourishment from the earth, and transform it into fruits; and the same with minerals, which they regarded as generated in the womb of the earth. It was to this half-spiritual, half-material theory that they had recourse to account for the transformations that are perpetually going on in every department of nature. As the active principle in each object was so potent in effecting the changes which we constantly observe, they imagined that it might attain to a condition of higher development and greater efficiency. Such an upward tendency was, in fact, perpetually at work; and all things were striving to "purge off their baser fires" and enter on a higher and purer state. Nor were they merely striving to clothe themselves with material forms of a higher order. Matter itself was constantly passing the limits of sense and putting on the character of conscious spirit. This idea threw over the face of nature a glow of poetry. It awakened the torpid imagination and created an epoch in literature. It kindled the fancy of Chuangtze, inspired the eloquence of Lü-tsu, and it figures in a thousand shapes among the graceful tales of the *Liao-chai*. It filled the earth with fairies and genii. An easy step connected them with those mysterious points of light which in all ages have excited so powerfully the hopes and fears of the human race. Astrology became wedded to alchemy, and the five principal planets bear in the current language of the present day the names of the elements over which they are regarded as presiding.

In China, as elsewhere, alchemy has always been an occult science. Its students have been pledged to secrecy, and their knowledge transmitted mainly by means of oral tradition, each adept tracing his lineage back to Huang

Ti (B. C. 2700) or Kuang Ch'engtze, as the Freemason deduces his pedigree from Solomon or Hiram of Tyre.*

Their doctrines, like the delicate beauties of some Eastern climes, were never allowed to go abroad without being covered with a veil. They were wrapped in folds of impenetrable mystery, and expressed, for the most part, in the measured lines and metaphorical language of poetry. Still, in spite of every precaution that pride or jealousy was able to suggest, some of their secrets would gradually ooze out, and many of the rules for working metals now in common use bear in their very terms the stamp of an alchemic parentage.

After this cursory survey, it may not be amiss to introduce a few extracts from native authors, professors of the mysterious lore, in order to ascertain how far they corroborate the foregoing views, but especially to aid us in deciding whether any real connection is to be traced between the Chinese and European schools of alchemy.

I. FROM KAO SHANGTZE.

The Secret of Immortality.†

“The body is the dwelling-place of life; the spirits are the essence of life; and the soul is the master of life.

* Huang Ti is at least semi-mythical. The earliest historical sovereign who became a votary of alchemy was Ch'in Shih Huang, the builder of the Great Wall, B. C. 220.

† These extracts are not arranged in the order of time. The antiquity of the system will be considered in another place; and I begin with two from writers whose age I am not able to fix with precision. For the citations from both I am indebted to a compilation, in twelve volumes, entitled *The Elixir or Quintessence of the Philosophers*. Among the philosophers cited, those who favored alchemy are in a very small minority.

When the spirits are exhausted, the body becomes sick; when the soul is in repose, the spirits keep their place; and when the spirits are concentrated, the soul becomes indestructible. Those who seek the elixir must imitate the *Yin* and *Yang* [the active and passive principles in nature] and learn the harmony of numbers. They must govern the soul and unite their spirit. If the soul is a chariot, the spirits are its horses. When the soul and spirits are properly yoked together, you are immortal."

II. FROM TANTZE.

The Power of Miracles.

"The clouds are a dragon, the wind a tiger. Mind is the mother, and matter the child. When the mother summons the child, will it dare to disobey? Those who would expel the spirits of evil must (by the force of their mind) summon the spirits of the five elements. Those who would conquer serpents must obtain the influences of the five planets. By this means the *Yin* and *Yang*, the dual forces of nature, may be controlled; winds and clouds collected; mountains and hills torn up by the roots; and rivers and seas made to spring out of the ground. Still the external manifestation of this power is not so good as the consciousness of its possession within."

III. FROM THE SAME.

The Adept Superior to Hunger, Cold, and Sickness.

"He inhales the fine essence of matter, how can he be hungry? He is warmed by the fire of his own soul, how can he be cold? His five vitals are fed on the essence of the five elements, how can he be sick?"

IV. FROM LU TSU, OF THE T'ANG DYNASTY.*

Patience Essential to Success.

"Would you seek the golden *tan* [the elixir], it is not easy to obtain. The three powers [sun, moon, and stars] must seven times repeat their footsteps; and the four seasons nine times complete their circuit.

"You must wash it white and burn it red; when one draught will give you ten thousand ages, and you will be wafted beyond the sphere of sublunary things."

V. FROM THE SAME.

The Necessity of a Living Teacher.

"Every one seeks long life, but the secret is not easy to find. If you covet the precious things of heaven, you must reject the treasures of earth. You must kindle the fire that springs from water, † and evolve the *Yin* con-

* Lü-Tsu (or Lü-Yen) flourished in the latter half of the eighth century. In early life respected as a scholar and a magistrate, and in later years famed for the eloquence of his style and the elevation of his character, he did much to revive the decaying credit of the "school of the genii." His works are voluminous and well known, but, like most of those ascribed to the great masters of Taoism, probably comprehend much that is not genuine.

† This phrase reminds us of a quaint piece of doggerel from the pen of George Ripley, a noted alchemist of England, who died in 1490, notwithstanding the medicines recommended in his two books on Alchymie and Aurum Potabile. The following are a few of his incomprehensible verses:

"The well must brenc in water clear,
Take good heed, for this they fere,
The fire with water brent shall be,
The earth on fire shall be set
And water with fire shall be knit.

tained within the *Yang*. One word from a sapient master, and you possess a draught of the golden water."

VI. FROM THE SAME.

The Chief Elements in Alchemy.

"All things originate from earth. If you can get at the radical principle, the spirit of the green dragon is mercury, and the water of the white tiger* is lead. The knowing ones will bring mother and child together, when earth will become heaven, and you will be extricated from the power of matter."

VII. FROM THE SAME.

Description of the Philosopher's Stone: Self-culture Necessary to Obtain it.

"I must diligently plant my own field. There is within it a spiritual germ that may live a thousand years. Its flower is like yellow gold. Its bud is not large, but the seeds are round [globules of mercury?] and like to a spotless gem. Its growth depends on the soil of the central palace [the heart], but its irrigation must proceed

.
Of the white stone and the red
Lo, here is the true deed!"

* *Yin* and *Yang* are the dual forces which control the elements of nature. Though generally referred to the sexual system, their chief symbols are the sun and moon, and the original signification of the terms is light and darkness. The "tiger" and "dragon" are synonyms for the oft-repeated *Yin* and *Yang*. Their use in this sense is comparatively ancient, as we may gather from the title of a book still extant, by the historian Pan Ku, in the first century of our era.

from a higher fountain [the reason]. After nine years of cultivation, root and branch may be transplanted to the heaven of the greater genii."

VIII. FROM A BIOGRAPHER OF LU-TSU.

Speaking of the labors of his great master, he says, "Among the eight stones, he made most use of cinnabar, because from that he extracted mercury; and among the five metals, he made most use of lead, because from that he obtained silver. The fire of the heart [blood] is red as cinnabar; and the water of the kidneys [urine] is dark as lead. To these must be added sulphur, that the compound may be efficacious. Lead is the mother of silver, mercury, the child of cinnabar. Lead represents the influence of the kidneys, mercury that of the heart."

We must here introduce a few extracts from the *Wu Chen Pien*, a work which still holds the place of a textbook among the followers of Laotze. They will serve to indicate the spirit and aim of these operations, though the processes are still carefully concealed. In fact, all that is given to the public seems merely designed to inflame the imagination, and to induce readers to place themselves under the instruction of a Taoist master.

1. *The Great Motive*.—"However long this mortal life, its events are all uncertain. He who yesterday bestrode his horse so grandly at the head of the street, to-day is a corpse in the coffin. His wife and his wealth are his no longer. His sins must take their course, and self-deception will do no good. If you do not seek the great remedy, how will you find it? If you find out the method and do not prepare it, how unwise are you!"

2. *A Vindication*.—"If the virtuous follow a false doctrine, they reclaim it; but if the vicious profess a true doctrine, they pervert it. So it is with the golden elixir:

a deviation of an inch leads to the error of a mile. If I succeed, then my fate is in my own hands, and my body may last as long as the heavens. But the vulgar pervert this doctrine to the gratification of low desires [such as those for wealth and pleasure]."

3. *Outline of Process*.—"In the gold-furnace you must separate the mercury from the cinnabar, and in the gemmy bath you must precipitate the silver from the water. To wield the fires of this divine work is not the task of a day. But out of the midst of the pool suddenly the sun rises." *

No one at all acquainted with the operations of chemistry can fail to remark how much is implied in this reference to the precipitation of silver. Nor can any one familiar with the language of Western alchemists avoid being struck by the similarity of the terms here employed. As he reads of "separating mercury from cinnabar," "precipitating silver," "wielding the fires of the divine work," the "gemmy bath," and the "sun rising out of the pool," does he not fancy himself perusing a fragment from Lully or Albertus describing the *balneum mariæ* and the production of gold?

We add three more to our series of illustrative extracts:

1. *The Reason for Obscure and Figurative Phraseology*.—"The holy sage was afraid of betraying the secrets of heaven. He accordingly sets forth the true Yin and Yang under the images of the white tiger and

* A few years ago I made the acquaintance of a Kiangsi man by the name of Hsiung, who had published a book of some literary merit, and was withal an ardent student of the occult science. A manuscript volume of his own compilation, which he permitted me to examine, contained, among other diagrams, one which represented the sun rising out of a smoking furnace—showing that the hermetic symbol for gold is the same in China as in Europe.

the green dragon. And the harmony of the two chords he represents under the symbols of the true lead and the true mercury." *

2. *Nature of the Inward Harmony*.—"The two things to be united are *wuh* and *wo*, the *me* and the *not me*. When these combine, the passions are in harmony with nature, and the elements are complete."

In other passages we have noticed the outcropping of a moral idea. In this we find a materialistic doctrine suddenly metamorphosed into the most subtle form of pantheistic idealism.

3. *Self-discipline the Best Elixir* (from Tantzé, not in *Wu Chen Pien*)—"Among the arts of the alchemist is that of preparing an elixir which may be used as a substitute for food. This is certainly true; yet the ability to enjoy abundance or endure hunger comes not from the elixir, but from the fixed purpose of him who uses it. When a man has arrived at such a stage of progress that to have and not to have are the same; when life and death are one; when feeling is in harmony with nature, and the inner and the outer worlds united—then he can escape the thralldom of matter, and leave sun, moon, and stars behind his back. To him it will then be of no consequence whether he eat a hundred times in a day, or only once in a hundred days." We might fill volumes with

* It is curious to see how Western alchemists exhibit the same phase of feeling. Howes, an old writer, quoted in Mr. Lowell's *New England of Two Centuries Ago*, expresses himself thus in a letter to Gov. Winthrop of Massachusetts: "Dear friend, I desire with all my heart that I might write plainer to you; but in discovering the mystery, I may diminish its majesty, and give occasion to the profane to abuse it, if it should fall into unworthy hands." The mystery was the *unity of matter*. He adds, "As there is all good to be found in unity, and all evil in duality and multiplicity, *phœnix illa admiranda sola semper existit*."

similar extracts without, we fear, adding much to the information of our readers.

The composition of the elixir was a secret which the alchemist did not care to divulge. If, therefore, we seek for precise directions for its preparation in the writings of a professed adept, we seek in vain.

There is, indeed, one oft-repeated formula, which appears to be absurdly simple. It is this: "*Pb.* 8 *oz.*, *Hg.* $\frac{1}{2}$ *lb.*; mix thoroughly, and the combination will result in a mass of the golden elixir." But it ceases to be simple when we learn that both metals and proportions are to be taken in a mystical sense; that, in fact, instead of indicating the materials of the elixir, they only point to the precise moment when the final touch is to be given to a complicated process—viz., one minute after the full of the moon. If this resolves itself into "moonshine," another, which has the air of being more in detail, is still less luminous. "Plant the *Yang* and grow the *Yin*; cultivate and cherish the precious seed. When it springs up, it shows a yellow bud; the bud produces mercury, and the mercury crystallizes into granules like grains of golden millet. One grain is to be taken at a dose, and the doses repeated for a hundred days, when the body will be transformed and the bones converted into gold. Body and spirit will both be endowed with miraculous properties, and their duration will have no end." These recipes are both from standard text-books of the Taoist school.

Ko Hung, of the fourth century, is one of the most voluminous writers on the subject. He gives nine varieties of the *tan*, but no clear account of the preparation of any of them. The following extract from his work may serve to show the kind of reasoning by which he and his fellows suffered themselves to be deluded:

"I formerly thought the Taoist mystery was intended to delude simple folk, and that there was nothing in it but empty words; but when I saw the Emperor Wu subject Tso Tse and others to a fast of nearly a month—their complexion continuing fresh and their strength unabated—I said there was no reason why they should not extend the fast to fifty years.

"Another Taoist, Kan Shih, placed a number of fish in boiling oil; some of them having first swallowed a few drops of an elixir, swam about as if they were in the water, the others were boiled so that they could be eaten.

"Silk-worms taking the same medicine lived for ten months; chickens and young dogs taking it ceased to grow; and a white dog on taking it turned black; all of which shows that there are things in heaven and earth surpassing our comprehension. Would that I could break the fetters of sense and give my whole heart to the pursuit of the elixir of life!"

We find a more explicit account of the composition of the elixir in the *Ko Chih Ching Yuan*, or Mirror of Scientific Discovery; but here again we are not favored with anything beyond a barren inventory of ingredients, without any statement of proportion or manipulation.

"The elixir of the eight precious things," says this author, "is so called because it contains cinnabar, orpiment, realgar, sulphur, saltpetre, ammonia, empty green [an ore of cobalt], and mother-of-clouds [a kind of mica]."

This and the other passages above cited throw, we confess, very little light on any question of practical science; but they are not unimportant in relation to the history of science, indicating as they do the spirit and aims of the Chinese alchemists—the most enthusiastic, and, as we

think, the earliest, explorers in a region which has proved to be one of inexhaustible fertility.

The results of their labors in the way of chemical discovery it may not be easy to determine; though it is safe to affirm that, for what they knew on that subject prior to their recent intercourse with the West, the Chinese are mainly indebted to those early devotees of the experimental philosophy who passed their lives among the fumes of the alembic. The skill which the Chinese exhibit in metallurgy, their brilliant dye-stuffs and numerous pigments; their early knowledge of gunpowder, alcohol, arsenic, Glauber's salt, calomel, and corrosive sublimate; their pyrotechny; their asphyxiating and anæsthetic compounds—all give evidence of no contemptible proficiency in practical chemistry.*

In their books of curious receipts, we find instructions for the manufacture of sympathetic inks, for removing stains, compounding and alloying metals, counterfeiting gold, whitening copper, overlaying the baser with the precious metals, etc. In some of these recipes a caution is added that neither "women, cats, nor chickens" be allowed to approach during the process, obviously a relic of alchemistic superstition.

The Hermes of China has no female disciples, though Europe can boast the names of not a few. The alchemist of China has generally been a celibate, and very frequently a religious ascetic, to whom the life-giving elixir,

* See Davis's Chinese, ch. xviii., for a very interesting account of the preparation of calomel (chloride of mercury) by a Chinese chemist, and by a truly Chinese process. In the same chapter the author sketches the fantastic physical theories of the Chinese, and adds, "All this looks very much as if the philosophy of our forefathers was derived intermediately from China."

rather than the aurific stone, was the chief object of pursuit.

Lü-tsu, one of the most eminent, is said to have earned immortality by rejecting the art of making gold.*

In the Chinese system there are two processes—the one inward and spiritual, the other outward and material. To obtain the greater elixir, involving the attainment of immortality, both must be combined; but the lesser elixir, which answers to the philosopher's stone, or a magical control over the powers of nature, might be procured with less pains. Both processes were pursued in seclusion, commonly in the recesses of the mountains, the term for adepts signifying "mountain men."

In a discourse on metals in one of the works above cited, we are told that the seminal principle of gold first assumes the form of quicksilver. Exposed to the influence of the moon, it is liquid; but when subjected to the action of the pure *Yang*, the sun or the male essence, it solidifies and becomes yellow gold. Those who desire to convert quicksilver into gold should carry on their operations among the mountains, that the effluences from the stones may assist the process.

Nothing seems to be required in addition to the incidental proofs already adduced to establish the existence

* As the legend goes, shortly after commencing the study of the art, he was met by one of the old genii, who offered to impart to him the great secret of transmutation. "But," asked the young man, "will not the artificial gold relapse to its original elements in the course of time?" "Yes," replied the genius, "but that need not concern you, as it will not happen until after ten thousand ages." "I decline it then," said Lü-tsu. "I would rather live in poverty than bring a loss on my fellow-men, though after ten thousand ages." The noble sense of right was more meritorious than any number of sham charities; and the youth who had conscience enough to spurn the gilded bait was at once admitted to the heaven of the genii.

of a *connection* between the alchemy of Europe and that of China; still, a few considerations in the way of comparison may serve to make the nature and extent of that connection somewhat more apparent.

1. The study of alchemy did not make its appearance in Europe until it had been in full vigor in China for at least six centuries. Nor did it appear there, according to the best authorities, until the fourth century, when intercourse with the Far East had become somewhat frequent. It entered Europe, moreover, by way of Byzantium and Alexandria, the places in which that intercourse was chiefly centred. At a later day it was revived in the West by the irruption of the Saracens, who may be supposed to have had better opportunities for becoming acquainted with it in consequence of being nearer to its original source. One of the most renowned seats of alchemic industry was Bagdad while it was the seat of the caliphate. An extensive commerce was at that period carried on between Arabia and China. In the eighth century embassies were interchanged between the caliphs and the emperors. Colonies of Arabs were established in the seaports of the Empire; and the grave of a cousin of Mahomet remains at Canton as a monument of that early intercourse.

2. The objects of pursuit were in both schools identical, and in either case twofold—immortality and gold.

In Europe the former was the less prominent because the people, being in possession of Christianity, had a sufficiently vivid faith in a future life to satisfy their instinctive longings without having recourse to questionable arts.

3. In either school there were two elixirs, the greater and the less, and the properties ascribed to them corresponded very closely.

4. The principles underlying both systems are identical in the composite nature of the metals, and their vegetation from a seminal germ. Indeed, the characters *tsing*, for the germ, and *tai*, for the matrix, which constantly occur in the writings of Chinese alchemists, might be taken for the translation of terms in the vocabulary of the Western school, did not their higher antiquity forbid the hypothesis.

5. The ends in view being the same, the means by which they were pursued were nearly identical; mercury and lead (to which sulphur was tertiary) being as conspicuous in the laboratories of the East as mercury and sulphur were in those of the West. It is of less significance to add that many other substances were common to both schools than it is to note the remarkable coincidence that in Chinese as in European alchemy the names of the principal reagents are employed in a mystical sense.*

6. Both schools, or at least individuals in both, held the strange doctrine of a cycle of changes, in the course of which the precious metals revert to their original elements.

7. Both systems were closely interwoven with astrology.

8. Both led to the practice of magical arts and unbounded charlatanism.

9. Both dealt in language of equal extravagance; and the style of European alchemists, so unlike the sobriety of thought characteristic of the Western mind, would, if considered alone, furnish ground for a probable conjec-

* Robert Boyle (quoted in *Nature*, January, 1877) is unsparing in his denunciation of "those sooty empirics, who have their eyes darkened and their brains troubled with the smoke of their furnaces; and who are wont to evince their salt, sulphur, and mercury (to which they give the canting title of hypostatical principles) to be the true principle of things."

ture that their science must have had its origin in the fervid fancy of an Oriental people.*

In conclusion, granting that the leading objects of alchemical pursuit are such as might have suggested themselves to the human mind in any country, as it felt its way towards an acquaintance with the forces of nature, yet the similarity of the circumstances with which they are found associated in the West and the East forbids the supposition of an independent origin. Setting aside as untenable the claims of Europe and of Western Asia, we regard alchemy as unquestionably a product of the remoter East. To the honor of being its birthplace, India and China are rival claimants. The pretensions of the former † we are not in a position to estimate by direct investigation; but they appear to us to be excluded by the proposition, of which there is abundant proof, that *the alchemy of China is not an exotic, but a genuine product of the soil of that country.*

As before remarked, it springs from Taoism, an in-

* The whimsical idea of the homunculus, which was so prominent in the works of the later alchemists of the West, and which plays such a conspicuous rôle in the second part of Goethe's Faust, is one of which I can find no vestige in the records of Eastern alchemy. In the writings of the latter school, however, the power of synthetic creation is asserted boldly enough, and the idea of producing the homunculus, i. e. of creating a human being by an artificial process, is, in fact, only a particular application of the principle.

† That much-lamented sinologue, the late Mr. Mayers, favors the claim of India, though, alas! it is no longer possible to question him as to the grounds of his opinion. In his essay on the origin of gunpowder, he says, "It is at least allowable to surmise that those Brahmin chemists who, it is *almost proved, inaugurated the search after the philosopher's stone and the elixir vitæ* may have been the first to discover what secret forces are developed in the fiery union between sulphur and saltpetre."

digenous religion; and shows itself in clearly defined outlines, if not in full maturity, at a time when there was little or no intercourse with India. Had it appeared some centuries later simultaneously with the introduction of Buddhism, there might have been more reason to look on it as a foreign importation. In polar antagonism with the idealistic philosophy of Buddha, its fundamental tenets are not only found in the ancient manual of Laotze,* they are distinctly traceable in the oldest of the Confucian classics.

In the *I Ching*, the diagrams of which are referred to Fu Hsi, B. C. 2800, while the text dates from Wen Wang, B. C. 1150, and the commentary from Confucius, B. C. 500, we discover at length what appears to us the true source of those prolific ideas which prepared the way for our modern chemistry. Its name, *The Book of Changes*, is suggestive; and we find throughout its contents the vague idea of change replaced by the more definite one of "transformation," the key-word of alchemy.

In the very first section, Wen Wang descants on the "changes and transmutations of the creative principle;" and Confucius, in several chapters of his commentary, grows eloquent over the same theme. "How great," he exclaims, "is change! How wonderful is change! When heaven and earth were formed, change was throned in their midst; and should change cease to take place, heaven and earth would soon cease to exist." "The diagrams," he says again, "comprehend the profoundest secrets of

* The famous poet, Pailotien, in a well-known stanza, asserts that the extravagances of alchemy are not to be found there. Yet the thoughtful reader cannot fail to discover its latent principles, especially the effect of discipline in securing an ascendancy over matter, and the protean power of transmutation hidden in the forces of nature. The alchemists all claim Laotze as a lineal ancestor, though they derive their origin from a remoter source.

the universe; and the power of exciting the various motions of the universe depends on their explanation: the power to effect *transmutation* depends on the understanding of the diagrams of changes." Here, in a word, is the leading idea of the *I Ching*; and, at the same time, the general object of Chinese students of alchemy. Indeed, so thoroughly are their works pervaded by the spirit of that venerable epitome of primitive science that it is impossible to mistake the source from which they derive their inspiration. The Taoists, without a dissenting voice, recognize it as the first book in the canon of their sect; and the Tyrant of Ch'in, a zealous votary of alchemy, spared the *I Ching* from the flames to which he consigned all the other writings of Confucius and his disciples. We have therefore no hesitation in affirming that alchemy is INDIGENOUS TO CHINA, AND COEVAL WITH THE DAWN OF LETTERS.

BOOK II

Chinese Literature

IV

POETS AND POETRY IN CHINA

THAT the Chinese are capable of poetry may to some be a revelation, so practical and prosaic are the specimens of the race with whom they have come in contact. Yet an educated Chinese is, of all men, the most devoted to the cultivation of poetry. If he makes a remarkable voyage, he is sure to give the world his impressions in verse. He inscribes fresh couplets on his door-posts every New Year's Day. Poetical scrolls, the gifts of friends, adorn the walls of his shop or study. He spends his leisure in tinkering sonnets; and, when he escorts a guest as far as some pretty pavilion on a hill-side, he never fails to extract from his boot-top the ready pencil, and to indite in verse an adieu, which passes for impromptu—scrawling, at the same time, on wall or pillar a record of the occasion.

All this is, no doubt, somewhat artificial, but it has its root in national sentiment. For of China it is true to-day, as of no other nation, that an apprenticeship in the art of poetry forms a leading feature in her educational system. Wales has her Eisteddfod, or annual assemblage of bards, and the great schools of England have their prize poems; but in China no youth who aspires to civil office or literary honors is exempted from composing verse in his trial examination. To be a tax-collector, he is tested not in arithmetic but in prosody—a usage that has been in force for nearly a thousand years. Its origin, in fact, goes back much further. For did not Confucius make poetry

the front foot of his educational tripos? "Let poetry," he says, "be the beginning, manners the middle, and music the finish."

The sage who prescribed this course of study was a musician; but if he ever wrote verse, not a line of it has come down to our day. He was, however, far from prosaic. His sayings sparkle with gems of metaphor; and that he keenly enjoyed poetry and appreciated its refining influence is evident from the maxim just quoted.

A stronger proof of his taste for poetry is the fact that, in one of the Five Classics, he took pains to collect and preserve the most noteworthy poems that had appeared prior to his day. In another, the *Shu*, or Book of History, edited by him, he has also preserved sundry fragments of primeval poetry. We have there the spectacle of princes and their ministers improvising responsive verse, a thousand years before the Trojan War.

In China, as in Greece, the birth of poetry preceded that of philosophy. The Lyric Muse heralded the dawn of culture; and, by the first light of history, her rosy fingers are discerned busily engaged in weaving a robe of many colors to cover the nakedness of new-born humanity.

Epic poetry, so conspicuous in India, is wholly wanting in China, its place being supplied by historical romance, which exhibits all the features of poetry with the exception of verse.

Dramatic poetry is abundant; but the drama, though it emerged ten centuries ago, is, if compared with our modern stage, still in a very primitive condition. It has scarcely got beyond the age of Thespis. An actor changes his dress, as he changes his rôle, in the sight of the audience, singing out as he dons the robes of majesty: "Now I am your humble servant, the Emperor."

Didactic poems, in which verse serves simply as an aid to the memory, are so common that official proclamations are frequently thrown into that form. When, in consequence of the triumph of British arms half a century ago, five ports were opened to the residence of foreigners, the Emperor caused a compend of the teachings of the sages to be published in verse as an antidote to their doctrines. Indeed, so highly esteemed is verse as a vehicle for instruction that a popular encyclopædia, in forty volumes, is composed entirely in verse.

Passing over minor divisions, we shall devote special attention to lyric poetry, of which the Chinese have produced an enormous quantity, and in which, in the face of all competitors, they are able to vindicate a high position.

Their lyric poetry falls, roughly, into three periods—ancient, mediæval and modern. Their ancient lyrics consist chiefly of a copious anthology, re-edited by Confucius, but not compiled by him. This anthology contains three hundred and six pieces—songs, ballads, heroic odes and sacrificial hymns. The songs and ballads are so selected as to reflect the manners of the several states into which the Empire was at that time divided. They exhibit a simplicity in social arrangements which is in strong contrast with the artificial life of the present day.

Besides epithalamial verse, which is admitted to be ethically correct, there are love songs and love stories which shocked the formal moralists of later times. We, with a less fettered judgment, find in them nothing to object to, unless it be the vapid inanity of most of them. As a whole, they stand in point of morality far above any similar collection that has come down to us from pagan antiquity. To secure this degree of purity, they underwent a Bowdlerizing process at the hands of Confucius

or his predecessors. So confident was Confucius that all traces of evil had been expunged that he declared that, "of these three hundred odes, there is not one that departs from the purity of thought."

We must not think of Confucius as always discoursing wisdom, or as perpetually hampered by a stiff ceremonial. He was one of the most human of sages—a sort of wiser, better Solomon, who, though he spoke more than "three thousand proverbs," found time to edit, if he did not compose, a great many charming canticles. As a musician, he must have enjoyed their harmonies of rhyme and rhythm—attractions which those ancient poems have entirely lost, through changes which the language has undergone in the lapse of ages. Here is a fragment that has a history:

"A speck upon your ivory fan
You soon may wipe away;
But stains upon the heart or tongue
Remain, alas, for aye."

Hearing a young man repeat these lines from time to time, Confucius chose him for his son-in-law. He showed enough affection for his daughter to select an honest man for her husband; yet he admitted into his collection, without note or comment, a ballad which has done much to perpetuate among his people a barbarous contempt for women:

"When a son is born—in a lordly bed
Wrap him in raiment of purple and red;
Jewels and gold for playthings bring
For the noble boy who shall serve the king.

"When a girl is born—in coarse cloth wound,
With a tile for a toy, let her lie on the ground.
In her bread and her beer be her praise or her blame
And let her not sully her parents' good name."

Had the sage but bethought himself to attach to this relic a little note of disapproval, how much cruelty he might have averted by the stroke of a pen!

The following song for New Year's Eve is as true to human sentiment to-day as it still is to the aspects of nature. To make it suit the season, however, we must remember that the date of New Year's Eve was probably a month earlier than at present, and the latitude about thirty-five degrees—that of Honan:

“The voice of the cricket is heard in the hall,
The leaves of the forest are withered and sere;
My sad spirits droop at those chirruping notes,
So thoughtlessly sounding the knell of the year.

“Yet why should we sigh at the change of a date,
When life's flowing on in a full, steady tide?
Come, let us be merry with those that we love;
For pleasure in measure there is no one to chide.”

This is the oldest temperance ode in the world. It was designed, as the Chinese say, to curb the excesses incident to the season, by recommending “pleasure in measure.” It probably antedates the founding of Rome.

Before dismissing these ancient odes, it should be said that a characteristic of their structure is the refrain. They generally start with a poetic image, such as the plaintive cry of a deer, or the note of a water-fowl; which is repeated at the beginning or end of each stanza, albeit without any very clear relation to the theme of the poem. Burns's famous song, “Green grow the rashies, O!” is in this respect thoroughly Chinese. Tennyson's graver melody, “Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O sea!” is equally in keeping with the style of a Chinese lyric. The whole piece is pervaded by the moaning of the sea, suggesting more than words:

“And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.”

There is a book of elegies, of a somewhat later age, which is held in much esteem. It is chiefly the work of one man, Chu Yuan, who proved his genius, or at least impressed it on posterity, by drowning himself.

Passing over this, we come to the beginning of China's Middle Age, the dynasty of Han, under which the revival of letters quickened every kind of intellectual activity. The poetry of this period shows a notable advance toward perfection of form; though its high qualities may not be discoverable in the specimens which I have to offer.

The first is by Chia I, a Minister of State who was sent into banishment about 200 B. C. In spirit and incident, it reminds one of Poe's "Raven;" but the task of finding out how Poe got wind of his Chinese predecessor must be left to others:

“In dismal, gloomy, crumbling halls,
Betwixt moss-covered, reeking walls,
An exiled poet lay—

“On his bed of straw reclining,
Half despairing, half repining—
When, athwart the window sill,
In flew a bird of omen ill,
And seemed inclined to stay.

“To my book of occult learning
Suddenly I thought of turning,
All the mystery to know
Of that shameless owl or crow,
That would not go away.

“‘Wherever such a bird shall enter
'Tis sure some power above has sent her,’
So said the mystic book, ‘to show
The human dweller forth must go;’
But *where*, it did not say.

" Then anxiously the bird addressing,
And my ignorance confessing,
' Gentle bird, in mercy deign
The will of Fate to me explain.
Where is my future way? '

" It raised its head as if 'twere seeking
To answer me by simply speaking;
Then folded up its sable wing,
Nor did it utter anything;
But breathed a ' Well-a-day! '

" More eloquent than any diction,
That simple sigh produced conviction;
Furnishing to me the key
Of the awful mystery
That on my spirit lay.

" ' Fortune's wheel is ever turning,
To human eye there's no discerning
Weal or woe in any state;
Wisdom is to bide your fate.'
That is what it seemed to say
By that simple ' Well-a-day.' "

A hundred years later, we have a touching ode addressed to his wife by Su Wu, when on the eve of a perilous embassy to the Grand Khan of Tartary:

" Twin trees whose boughs together twine,
Two birds that guard one nest,
We'll soon be far asunder torn,
As sunrise from the West.

" Hearts knit in childhood's innocence,
Long bound in Hymen's ties,
One goes to distant battle-fields,
One sits at home and sighs.

“Like carrier dove, though seas divide,
I'll seek my lonely mate;
But if afar I find a grave
You'll mourn my hapless fate.

“To us the future's all unknown;
In memory seek relief.
Come, touch the chords you know so well,
And let them soothe our grief.”

It speaks well for the domestic affections of the Chinese that the sentiment of this piece has so penetrated their literature that it has had imitators in every age, even down to our own days. The Commissioner Lin, whose high-handed proceedings provoked the Opium War, on going into banishment, addressed a similar adieu to his wife.

Passing over another century, we come to Pan Chih Yu, the Sappho of China, a gifted lady of the Court, B. C. 18. Though several of her compositions are extant, the best known is an ode inscribed on a fan, and presented to the Emperor:

“Of fresh, new silk, all snowy white,
And round as harvest moon;
A pledge of purity and love,
A small but welcome boon.

“While Summer lasts, borne in the hand,
Or folded on the breast,
'Twill gently soothe thy burning brow,
And charm thee to thy rest.

“But, ah! When Autumn frosts descend,
And Winter's winds blow cold,
No longer sought, no longer loved,
'Twill lie in dust and mold.

"This silken fan, then, deign accept,
 Sad emblem of my lot—
 Caressed and fondled for an hour,
 Then speedily forgot."

After an interval of two centuries, we come to the period of the "Three Kingdoms."

A weak tyrant, who occupied one of the thrones, was jealous of the talents of his younger brother, who had the reputation of being the first poet of his day. Reproaching the poet for thinking too highly of himself, he threatened him with death, unless he should on the instant compose a quatrain that would be accepted as a proof of genius. The young man strode slowly across the hall, his footsteps keeping time to the cadence of his verse, while he pronounced these lines:

"Are there not beans in yon boiling pot,
 And bean-stalks are burning below?
 Now why, when they spring from one parent root,
 Should they scorch each other so?"

The dynasty of T'ang (618-905 A. D.) witnessed the rise of the drama, and at the same time the culmination of lyric poetry. Tu Fu and Li Po were the Dryden and Pope of that age. The former, though for ten centuries he has enjoyed an immense popularity, had for a long time to struggle with poverty. "For thirty years I rode an ass," is a pathetic confession, which I shall not mar by the addition of another line from his voluminous works.

His great rival was more fortunate. Welcomed at court in his early prime, and praised by posterity as the brightest star that ever shone in the poetical firmament of China, Li Po is best known as a sort of Oriental Anac-

reon, a prince of bacchanalian bards. We have not space for more than two specimens of his verse—an epistle from a young wife to her husband in the army, evidently inspired by the farewell sonnet of Su Wu, and an ode on drinking alone by moonlight. The first is marked by the simplicity of Wordsworth; the second by the humor of Hood.

A SOLDIER'S WIFE TO HER HUSBAND.

"'Twas many a year ago—
How I recall the day!—
When you, my own true love,
Came first with me to play.

"A little child was I,
My head a mass of curls;
I gathered daisies sweet,
Along with other girls.

"You rode a bamboo horse,
And deemed yourself a knight—
With paper helm and shield
And wooden sword bedight.

"Thus we together grew,
And we together played—
Yourself a giddy boy,
And I a thoughtless maid.

"At fourteen I was wed,
And if one called my name
As quick as lightning flash
The crimson blushes came.

"'Twas not till we had passed
A year of married life,
My heart was knit to yours
In joy to be your wife.

“Another year, alas!
And you had joined your chieft
While I was left at home
In solitary grief.

“When victory crowns your arms,
And I your triumph learn,
What bliss for me to fly
To welcome your return!”

ON DRINKING ALONE BY MOONLIGHT.

“Here are flowers and here is wine;
But there's no friend with me to join
Hand to hand and heart to heart,
In one full bowl before we part.

“Rather then, than drink alone,
I'll make bold to ask the Moon
To condescend to lend her face,
The moment and the scene to grace.

“Lo! she answers and she brings
My shadow on her silver wings—
That makes three, and we shall be,
I ween, a merry company.

“The modest Moon declines the cup,
My shadow promptly takes it up;
And when I dance, my shadow fleet
Keeps measure with my twinkling feet.

“Although the Moon declines to tinkle,
She dances in yon shining ripple;
And when I sing, my festive song
The echoes of the Moon prolong.

“Say, when shall we next meet together?
Surely not in cloudy weather,
For you, my boon companions dear,
Come only when the sky is clear.”

A text book used in Chinese schools is called "Selections from a Thousand Bards." The authors are of all ages, but it would not be difficult to make a catalogue of a thousand belonging to this dynasty.

Of the present dynasty,* the most distinguished poet, if not the most gifted, is the Emperor Chien Lung, who closed his reign of a full cycle almost exactly a hundred years ago.

* Pao and Tung, late Ministers of State, were poets of no mean order. Both presented me with their works, as did several bards of less note. Not to enumerate other gifts of the kind, of which I have been the recipient, two old men (one ninety years of age), eminent as scholars and wearing the buttons of official rank, called on me lately, as I was passing through Shanghai, each bending under a load of original poems, which he desired to present. It was a great honor, but it was something of a burden also, for I had to buy another trunk to carry their books to Peking. Then, am I not expected to clothe them in English dress, and to make them known beyond the seas?—a thing which space forbids, at present.

V

THE CONFUCIAN APOCRYPHA

ASTRONOMERS tell us that, though Venus is so much nearer than Mars, it is impossible to obtain a clear view of her surface, on account of her dazzling brightness. Do we not experience a similar difficulty in contemplating the great luminaries of the human race? In their case, an atmosphere of myth always gathers round the nucleus of history, concealing and distorting their features.

This was the case with Him to whom the Western world owes its deliverance from the darkness of heathenism. Outside of the authentic records left us by the Four Evangelists, there was extant for a long time a floating mass of fable which it cost no little labor to expose and suppress. It was so with the wisest of the sages of Greece. How different the aspect which Socrates presents in the simple narrative of Xenophon from that which he is made to assume in the voluminous Dialogues of Plato! In the latter, we know that we are not reading history; yet they do contain historic elements,—Many of the doctrines and much of the manner of propounding them are derived from Socrates, even if the words in which they are clothed belong wholly to his eloquent disciple.

Such, is the case of Confucius. So great was the ascendancy to which he attained, within the five or six centuries succeeding his death, that it became the fashion to invoke his name for any document for which his fol-

lowers desired to conciliate popular favor. Especially was this the habit with that large class of writers, the *Po Tze*, whom we may describe as the Sophists of China. Take up a volume of Leitze or Chuangtze, and you meet with anecdotes, apologues, and discourses, put forth under the name of Confucius,—all of which are so evidently fictitious as to suggest a query whether they were ever intended to be taken as historical. These writers deal in a similar way, and some of them to a much greater extent, with the name of Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor,—a personage who belongs altogether to the realm of myth.

The pains-taking and conscientious authors of the *Lun Yü*, the *Confucian Memorabilia*, have made the world familiar with the Sage, who always spoke with deliberation, and acted with dignity; who had such a weakness for ginger that he was “never tired of eating it;” and who was so scrupulous as to petty proprieties that he “never sat down if his mat was awry.” To these trifling details, they add that, at home, he wore a tunic with one sleeve shorter than the other, and slept in a night-gown fifty per cent longer than his body; that, on going to bed, he ceased to talk; and, not to cite other traits of aspect and carriage, the conviction is forced upon us that we have here glimpses of a real man.

But turn to the outline of biography, familiar to every Chinese school-boy. Passing over the supernatural portents connected with his birth and death, we find the statement that Confucius was prime minister of Lu for three months; that, within that time, he effected such a reformation that precious things might be dropped in the street without risk of misappropriation; that shepherds refrained from watering their sheep before driving them to market, lest they should draw more than their proper



SHRINE AND TEMPLE OF CONFUCIUS

weight; that prisons were empty, and tribunals idle; that men were honest, and women chaste; and that the little state began to acquire such a preponderance that its neighbors resorted to unworthy stratagems to undermine the influence of the great reformer. These and other incidents, either wholly fictitious or greatly exaggerated, are found in the sober pages of Sze Ma Ch'ien, the Herodotus of China.

THE SAGE TAUGHT BY A CHILD.

Many of these incidents have been taken up and further expanded by later writers. For instance, the historian records that "Confucius took lessons from Hsiang T'o." Now, Hsiang T'o was a precocious child of seven years; and the record probably means nothing more than that the Sage condescended to take a hint from the lad, or to make use of him as an illustration in teaching, as a Greater Teacher did, when, his disciples contending for precedence, he set a little child before them as an object lesson in the graces of faith and humility.

Here is a specimen of the stories that have grown out of this obscure incident:—

Confucius, it is said, seeing a little boy playing with tiles in the street, called to him to make way for his carriage. "Not so," said the boy; "I am building a city. A city wall does not give way for a cart, but a cart goes round the wall." "You seem to be uncommonly clever for your years," said Confucius, surprised at the self-possession of the lad. "How so?" said the lad; "a hare at the age of three days can scamper over the fields, and should I not know a thing or two at the age of seven years? If you will tell me how many stars there are in heaven, I shall know more than I do now." "Why do you inquire about things so far away?" said

the Sage; "ask about something near at hand, and I will answer you." "Then," said the boy, "please tell me how many hairs you have in your eye-brows." The Sage was non-plussed; and, giving the lad a kindly smile, he drove silently away.

Another story, derived from the same source, is found in the works of Leitze.

Confucius met with two boys, who were discussing the question whether the sun is more distant in the morning or at noon. "It appears larger in the morning," said one; "and the nearer an object is, the larger it appears." "But," replied the other, "is not the sun hotter at noon than in the morning? And does not a hot object give more heat when near, than when far away?" Unable to agree, they referred the matter to the Sage; and he, with characteristic caution, left the question undecided; or, as one version has it, he was unable to decide, and the boys formed a low opinion of his intelligence.*

In treating of the apocryphal literature relating to Confucius, it is important to distinguish that which originated before the "burning of the books" from that which belongs to a later date. Works that preceded that catastrophe have, of course, the better chance of containing genuine traditions,—especially if, as in the case

* The German poet Claudius puts a similar dispute into the mouth of two rustics:—

Wie gross meinst du die Sonne sei?
 So gross vielleicht wie ein futter Heu
etc., etc.

How big, asked Hans, is the sun, do you say?
 As big, said Sep, as a load of hay.
 No! no! cried Hans, not half so big,
 About the size of an ostrich egg.

of Leitze and Chuangtze, they belong to the Taoist school, which was not proscribed, and therefore escaped the conflagration. In the writers last named, the reckless use of imagination vitiates their authority. In Chuangtze, there are more than fifty references to Confucius and his disciples, not one of which possesses any historical value.

In works of the later period, reminiscences of the Sage are far more multiplied; but their genuineness is not merely questionable on account of their remoteness from the times of their subject. Is it not obvious that an occurrence like the "fires of Ch'in," (240 B. C.) the avowed aim of which was to extirpate the teachings of Confucius, would open a wide field for the production of supposititious literature? So well, indeed, did the tyrant succeed in his purpose that only a few manuscripts escaped; and they, by being hidden for generations in the walls of houses.

A PREMIUM ON FORGERY.

On the accession of the Han Dynasty, when the first attempt was made to wake the lost books from their ashes, the same edict, which caused old men to ransack their brain for pages committed to memory in boyhood, encouraged others to exercise their inventive faculties to produce a plausible substitute. The rewards offered for discoveries of hidden Classics acted as a premium on forgery.

All the circumstances of the time were adapted to favor imposture. Under a new dynasty, letters blossomed afresh; and the subject which appealed most powerfully to the inventive faculties of the learned was the huge void left by the missing books. Pecuniary rewards, imperial favor, and popular esteem, all conspired

to incite them to effort; and *aut inveniam aut faciam* became a motto with thousands of zealous scholars.

Zeal for the Confucian school, which, for a time overshadowed by Taoism, now began to recover its lost ground, supplied an additional motive; and scholars, who wished to give currency to their own ideas, did not scruple to publish them under the names of the apostles of Confucianism, or even under that of the great Master himself.

The Arabs of Egypt are not more expert in manufacturing antique mummies than were the students of Han in the construction of ancient classics. Not to speak of spurious portions foisted into several of the canonical books, two at least of the works now reckoned among the *Thirteen Classics* are admitted to be of apocryphal origin. These are the *Li Chi*, or *Book of Rites*, and *Hsiao Ching*, or *Manual of Filial Duty*.

THE BOOK OF RITES.

This has had the good fortune to be included in the five *Ching*, for what reason it is difficult to divine, unless because it professes to record ritual observances which were in vogue in the period covered by the other four. It enjoys, therefore, a great authority from the eminence to which it has been raised.

More than any other work, it has shaped the external form of Chinese civilization,—preserving its essential unity under all vicissitudes, prescribing alike official forms and private manners.

The rules of the *Li Chi* are not, indeed, held as obligatory, any more than are the rituals of the Old Testament in the practice of Christendom; but, never having been formally abrogated, a larger proportion of them has entered into the life of the modern Chinese.

The compilers of this work no doubt found much genuine material drifting in a state of wreckage down the stream of time, and they had no hesitation in supplying from their own resources whatever might be required for its reconstruction. Nor did they, in any case, take pains to point out the boundary between the old and the new. What they discovered was at best a torso, and their ambition was to present it as a complete statue.

On reading it one is struck by a great inequality of style; parts are crabbed and obscure, while other parts flow in a pellucid stream, characteristic of an advanced stage of literary art. Take, for example, the chapter entitled *Ju Hsing*, the "Character of a Scholar," and you have an eloquent exposition of the conduct becoming a man of letters. Again, in the *Yüeh Chi*, you have a rhapsody on music, without a single indication which might enable a student to reproduce the music of the ancients. Both discourses are credited to Confucius, but the style is too modern by at least four centuries.

In some parts of the collection, the Sage is made to appear as interlocutor in a dialogue; and occasionally an incident is related as a basis for moral reflections. Such an incident is that of a family who exposed themselves to be devoured by wild beasts rather than submit to the exactions of mandarins.

"Mark that, my children," said Confucius, turning to his disciples; "oppressive officers are dreaded more than tigers."

The incident is sufficiently striking, and its moral is worthy of a Sage. The story of the serpent-catcher, by Liu Tsung Yuan, is based on it, and enforces the same moral in the elegant diction of a later age, exerting a restraining influence on the rapacity of officials, and promoting a spirit of independence among the people.

In itself, the tiger story is not incredible. In Oregon, I was told of a woman who had lost three husbands by grizzly bears. Perhaps one attraction to the soil of the new territory was just this facility of divorce?

THE BOOK OF FILIAL DUTY.

Like the *Li Chi*, the *Manual of Filial Duty* dates from the first century B. C.; and, like that work, it is reputed to have been discovered in the wall of a house belonging to a descendant of Confucius. In form, it consists of a series of discourses, addressed by the Sage to his disciple Tsengtze,—who served him as amanuensis, and who now wears the proud title of *Ch'uan Shêng*,—"Transmitter of the Sage."

In style, the book bears the impress of the age of its alleged discovery, being more modern by several centuries than that of its reputed author. It is remarkable for the fullness with which it expounds the working of filial piety as a social regulator in all the relations of life. Though the Christian finds in it no sufficient substitute for the prompting and restraining influence of faith in an omnipresent God, he must acknowledge that in China filial piety might be made a useful auxiliary to the higher sentiment. The decay of that higher sentiment (if it ever existed in China) was no doubt owing to the rise of polytheism; and philosophers were fain to seek in filial piety a force which should serve as the prop of morality.

The state makes it the basis of its legislation; and this book, whose canonicity the state has good reasons for upholding, is therefore a corner-stone in the social fabric. The very phrase "to rule the empire by filial piety," so often seen in official documents—is found in the eighth Chapter; and so beautifully is the idea developed

in the proem that I cannot forbear citing a few lines:—

“One day, when the Master was at leisure and Tsêng-tze in attendance, he said,—‘The ancient Sages possessed a perfect method for governing the empire, by which the people were made to live in harmony without discord between high and low;—do you understand it?’ Tsêng-tze rose and replied:—‘I am dull of apprehension; how should I understand it?’ ‘Sit down then,’ said the Master, ‘and I will teach you. Filial piety is the root of virtue, and the fountain of moral teaching. It begins with due care for the body because received from your parents; it culminates in conduct which will make your name immortal, and reflect glory on your father and mother. Its beginning is the service of your parents; its middle, the service of the sovereign; and its end, the formation of character.’”

The eighteen short chapters which follow do nothing more than amplify this text. They are so brief and pithy that school children commit them to memory, and accept them as rules of conduct for their subsequent life. The effect of the doctrines, thus set forth, can hardly be overestimated; and, in general, they are consonant with the teachings of the Sage as given in records of unquestioned authenticity. The *Hsiao Ching*, therefore, though apocryphal, does him no injustice, unless it be in one point, viz.,—in making conformity to the ordinances and even the costume of the ancient Kings an obligation of filial piety. It is known that Confucius was somewhat conservative; but it may be affirmed that he never enjoined such unreasoning submission to antiquity. Does he not teach, in the first section of the *Ta Hsüeh*, the *Great Study*, that the chief duty of a Prince is to effect the renovation of his people? How I have longed to see the rulers of China

wake up to the fact that their Great Teacher never intended them to be fast bound to the wheels of the ancient kings.

THE FAMILY TRADITIONS.

The last of these apocryphal writings which we shall notice at present is in some respects the most important of all. It is the *Chia Yu*, or *Family Traditions*. It appeared between two and three centuries later than the *Li Chi* and *Hsiao Ching*;—i. e., in the period of the Three Kingdoms. Its fortune, though less brilliant than that of those two most lucky forgeries, has been such as to surpass the ambition of its so-called editor. For though not, like them, set in the constellation of sacred classics, it is held to be “deutero-canonical;” and, as such, it stands in the Imperial catalogues at the head of *Ju Chia*, or orthodox writers of the Confucian School. The editor, Wang Su, frankly states the object he has in view in giving these *Traditions* to the world. “Errors are rampant,” he says in his preface, “and the Confucian highway is overgrown with brambles. Why should not I make an effort to clear it of obstructions. If no one, then, chooses to follow it, it will not be my fault.”

The zeal expressed in these words is not fitted to inspire confidence; and, when he informs us that he has opportunely obtained these *Traditions* in manuscript from a descendant of the Sage in the twenty-second generation, are we not disposed to regard the discovery as rather too *opportune*? Why should a member of the family of K'ung, after the lapse of seven centuries, be more likely to possess genuine traditions than any other of the “hundred names?” That the work as a whole is spurious, is admitted by native critics. That which secures for it unrivalled popularity is:—

1.—Its worthy aim; 2.—Its pleasing style; 3.—Something like an element of real tradition, derived from various sources; 4.—Adroit insertion and skilful amplification of authentic records.

Notwithstanding its multifarious contents, it is easy to separate the few grains of golden sand carried down by the stream of time from the bright clay in which the author has wrapped them up, with a view to increasing their bulk and weight.

A STRANGE MONITOR.

As a good example of his method, I may mention the manner in which he deals with a brief notice which he finds in Hsüntze, who lived three centuries before. Confucius had seen a water-vessel, which, when empty, hung obliquely; when half-full, hung vertically; but, on being filled, turned over and spilled its contents. It was said to have been placed on the right of the Prince's throne as a warning against pride, or fullness, which "precedes a fall."

Taking this for a text, Wang Su expands it into a discourse of considerable length, a copy of which I obtained in Japan, where it had evidently been used as an inscription in a princely or imperial palace.

It is, however, in paraphrases on the *Lun Yü* that he most frequently displays his peculiar skill. A few illustrations may not be out of place.

THREE WISHES.

Borrowing a hint from a passage in which Confucius calls on his disciples to describe the employ which each would find to his taste, our author shows us the Master with three of his disciples on a hill top. Enjoying the

boundless prospect, he says to them:—"Here our thoughts fly unfettered in all directions. Here you may give wing to fancy, and clothe your wildest dreams in words. Now, let each of you name the situation, or achievement, which would most completely fill the measure of his ambition."

Tze Lu declares for feats of prowess, choosing above all things to be able with a small force to humble a proud foe; and with his own hand to capture the leader of the opposing camp. Tze Kung, the finest talker of the School, bent on proving the tongue mightier than the sword, enlarging on his friend's picture of opposing armies ready to join in bloody conflict, adds that it would be his ambition to come between the hostile camps, to disarm them both by mere force of argument, showing each his true interest, and by skilful diplomacy to bring about an adjustment of their differences. "I should wish," he says, "no higher glory than that of such a peaceful victory."

Confucius commends his eloquence, and then calls on Yen Hui, his favorite disciple, the St. John of his School. With unassuming modesty, Yen declines to engage in competition with his arrogant companions; but, when urged by the Master, he says:—"My desire would be to find a good Prince, who would accept me for his Vizier. I would teach his people justice, propriety, and benevolence; and lead them no longer to build walls, or dig moats, but to turn their weapons of war into instruments of husbandry."

"Admirable," exclaimed Confucius; "such is the power of virtue."

In the *Memorabilia*, or *Lun Yü*, the Sage gives his suffrage to a disciple, who draws a charming picture of the pleasures of idleness. Wang Su has re-cast the en-

tire scene, in order to give it a conclusion more worthy of the nation's teacher, emphasizing the sentiment expressed by Longfellow:—

Were half the force that keeps the world in terror,
Were half the wealth that's spent on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals and forts.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE.

The famous saying of the great Agnostic—"We know not life, how can we know death?"—supplies an equally fine text for artful amplification. It is accordingly expanded into the following dialogue:—

"Do the dead retain a conscious existence?" inquired Tze Kung.

"If," replied Confucius, "I should say they do, I fear the pious and filial would neglect their living parents through devotion to the dead. If, on the other hand, I should say they do not, I fear that the unfilial might so far disregard their duties to the dead as to leave their parents unburied."

With this ambiguous answer, he closed his lips, and left his disciples on the horns of a torturing dilemma.

THE LESSON OF RUNNING WATER.

In the *Lun Yü*, we are told that the Sage, looking on a running stream, exclaimed:—"Behold an emblem of time; it ceases not, day or night."

In the *Traditions*, Confucius was gazing intently on the eastward flowing current of the Yellow River. A disciple, inquiring why a superior man always loves to look on the surface of a great stream, he replies:—"Because its flow never ceases; it nourishes all living things, and yet without labor. Its water is like virtue; it seeks

a low place; yet cities and palaces follow its course. It is like goodness, vast and inexhaustible; it is like truth, going straight forward without fear, even though a plunge of a hundred fathoms may be before it. This is why the superior man loves to look on the face of the flowing waters."

FOOLISH QUESTIONS AND WISE ANSWERS.

In the *Lun Yü*, Ai Kung, Duke of Lu, asks one or two questions. In the *Traditions*, he is made to ask a score or more. Here are two,—both frivolous; but they elicit wise answers:—

"Will you tell me," said the Duke, "what kind of crown was worn by the Emperor Shun?" After a prolonged silence, Confucius replied, but not until he was urged to speak:—"I was silent, because I do not know what kind of garments Shun wore; but I do know the principles on which he ruled his people. Why should not Your Highness inquire about them?" On another occasion, the Duke said to Confucius:—"I have heard of a man, who, on removing to a new house, forgot to take his wife. Was there ever a case of greater forgetfulness?" "Yes," replied Confucius; "it is that of the man who forgets himself."

TWO VIEWS OF LIFE.

A fine story, which Wang Su borrows from Leitze, is that of an old man of ninety, who, being asked why, under the burdens of age, poverty, and toil, he was still able to sing so merrily, replied:—"I have many reasons for feeling happy, but the principal are these, viz:—That I have come into life as a man; that I have reached a good old age; and that I am now soon to be released by the hand of death."

After relating this without acknowledgment, our author invents one in a similar style:—

Passing near a river, Confucius heard the voice of weeping. Overtaking an old man, from whom the voice proceeded, he inquired the cause of his distress.

“They are three,” replied the man; “I have failed in three things, which it is now too late to mend, and nothing remains but unavailing remorse.

When young, I went wandering over the world in quest of knowledge; and, when I returned home, my parents were dead.

In mature years, I served the Prince of Ch’i; but the Prince ruined himself by pride and debauchery, and I was unable to check his downward course.

In my life-time, I have had many friends, but I failed to attach them to me by a sincere and lasting affection; and now, in my old age, they have all forsaken me. Of these three errors, the greatest was the neglect of my parents.”

Yielding to a fresh transport of grief, the old man threw himself into the water and perished. “Mark this,” said Confucius, turning to his disciples; and that very day thirteen of them went home to serve their parents.

In general, stories and discourses which re-appear in the *Traditions*, display a marked improvement on their originals;—at least, in literary finish, though in some instances “expanded gold exchanges solid strength for feeble splendor.”

Thus far, we have looked on the finer side of the tapestry. Let us now turn to its seamy side, as it is necessary to do in order to complete the evidence of patch-work.

AN IMAGINARY NIAGARA.

On the road from Wei to Lu, Confucius comes to a cataract, thirty fathoms in height, which creates a whirlpool ninety *li* (30 miles) in circumference, and so furious is the current that neither fish nor tortoise can live in it; yet an intrepid swimmer, more lucky than Captain Webb at Niagara, succeeds in crossing. This passage suggests the wild fancy of Chuangtze; and, on turning to the older writer, we find it there, but less extravagant in its terms. Wang Su uses it to point a vapid moral; but he has blundered in admitting it among authentic traditions.

WISE QUESTIONS AND FOOLISH ANSWERS.

In the *Lun Yü*, it is said there were four things of which Confucius never spoke, viz.:—Fairy tales, feats of strength, outrageous crimes, and the gods (or the supernatural). A book exists, which takes these for its subject, and bears the title, *Things of which Confucius did not Speak*. There are not a few pages in these alleged *Traditions* that might be grouped under such a rubric.

One of the Princes asking him a question, Confucius launches into a dissertation on giants and dwarfs, in which he says the latter grow to three feet and the former to thirty.

Prince Chao, of Ch'u, in crossing a river, picks up a floating fruit resembling a cocoa-nut, and sends a messenger to learn its nature from Confucius. Without the least hesitation, the omniscient Sage gives the name of the fruit, and adds that the Prince may eat it, as it is a fruit of good omen, which only falls into the hands of one destined to be a leader of the nations. When a disciple asks him how he happens to know these facts

so exactly, he replies that he once heard a nursery rhyme to that effect:—it was prophetic, and this he knew to be its fulfilment.

In another passage, he explains the appearance of a strange bird in the same way. It was called *Shang Yang*, had only one leg, and, as he learned from a childish ditty, its arrival portended a deluge of rain.

These instances, with many others of the same kind, may be taken as completing the evidence that the so-called *Traditions* are a transparent fiction. If I have dwelt too long on this particular work, it is on account of the influence it exerts in fixing the popular ideal of the Sage, from the credit it enjoys of heading, as it does in official catalogues, the entire body of philosophers.

There are other works which contain similar fictions; but time fails to enumerate, not to say, examine them.

Taken as a whole, the volume of these apocryphal writings far exceeds that of the authentic records; the gaseous envelope surrounding the luminary is greater than its solid nucleus. But it may be doubted whether these fabrications, however well meant, have not detracted from the essential greatness of China's model wise man.

CONFUCIUS NO MYTH.

Let us conclude by briefly indicating a few points in which the apocryphal Confucius differs from the *real* founder of Chinese civilization; for, at this stage of our discussion, I need hardly say that Confucius was no myth. He is so far historical that he, and not Sze Ma, is the Father of Chinese History. His words and acts were minutely noted by contemporary pens, hundreds of his pupils contributing to transmit his teachings and perpetuate his memory. The attempt to make him a mythical

personage, like Pan Ku or Nü Kua, may afford an agreeable exercise for the leisure hours of an ingenious student; but it can no more unsettle the received conviction than Archbishop Whately's *Historic Doubts concerning Napoleon* could relegate the Corsican Conqueror to the companionship of Hercules and Bacchus. But, in the double personality that goes under that venerated name, it is time to point out the features in which the mythical Confucius differs from the historical. I limit myself to five:—

THE REAL AND THE MYTHICAL COMPARED.

1.—The real Sage was noted for modesty; the fictitious is a prig, who assumes to know everything. The myth-makers, who have attempted to display the universality of his knowledge, have succeeded in exposing their own ignorance.

2.—The real Confucius was a man of few words; his style, laconic and grave. The mythical is loquacious, and often occupied with trifles.

3.—The real Sage was reverential towards the Supreme Power of the Universe, but agnostic in spirit and practice. The Confucius of these Apocryphal books is excessively superstitious, drawing omens of the future from birds, beasts, and the nonsensical ditties of children.

4.—The real Sage, when asked if it is right to repay injury by injury, forbids revenge. The Apocryphal is made to teach the vendetta in its most truculent form, prescribing its measure for each degree of relationship,—the slayer of a father to be slain at sight, even in the halls of an imperial palace.

5.—The real Sage was humane, making humanity, or love, the first of the cardinal virtues in his moral system. The Apocryphal personage is cruel and unjust, putting

Shao Chêng Mao to death for five reasons,—not one of which would justify anything more severe than dismissal from office; and cutting off the hands and feet of a mountebank, who sought to amuse two princes on the occasion of a public meeting.

These Apocryphal writings contain, as I have said, much that is good. They must be studied to get at the sources of the later literature. But would it not be a worthy undertaking for some enlightened scholar, native or foreign, to sift these heterogeneous materials, and clear the name of the Great Master from all connection with the absurd, vain, and wicked things with which his memory has been loaded?

VI

CONFUCIUS AND PLATO—A COINCIDENCE

THE coincidence relates to a moot point of filial duty. In China, filial piety is recognized as the basis of social order. By the orthodox, it is even held to supply the place of religion; so that "he who serves his parents at home has no need to go far away to burn incense to the gods."

In the *Hsiao Ching*, a well-known manual for the instruction of youth, it is represented as affording an incentive to the discharge of duty in all situations, giving force and vitality to consciences which might otherwise remain dormant. Thus, a soldier who runs away is unfilial; an officer who is unfaithful to his prince is unfilial; and, in general, any conduct that entails disgrace is unfilial, because it must of necessity reflect discredit on the parents of the offender. A whole system of morals is deduced from this root; and casuistry finds scope in inventing difficult situations and in reconciling conflicting obligations. Truth is a virtue not much insisted on in Chinese books; and its comparative rarity brings into relief a class of people who vaunt their frankness, and scorn to palliate or extenuate in the interest of their dearest friends. They are called *chih jen*, "straight men."

A disciple of Confucius, speaking of one of these, says to the Master:—"In my country, there was a man renowned for truthfulness. When his father had stolen a sheep, he went to the magistrate and informed against him. Is his conduct to be commended?"

"In my country," the Sage replies, "the duty of truthfulness is understood differently,—A son is required in all cases to conceal the faults of his father, and a father to conceal those of his son. The obligations of truth are not violated by this practice."

A hundred years later, the question was not yet regarded as settled; or, to speak more properly, as with all moral questions, the old battles had to be fought over again.

Mencius was the oracle of the age, and one of his disciples brought up the subject by stating a hypothetical case. "Suppose," he said, "the father of the Emperor, being a private man, should commit murder. Is it the duty of the Criminal Judge to seize and condemn him?"

"Without doubt," replied Mencius.

"But then, how could the Emperor endure to see his father treated in that way? When the wise Shun was on the throne, if his villainous old father, Ku Sou, had committed murder, and was in danger of being condemned by Kao Yao, what would Shun have done?"

"Shun," replied the teacher, "would have taken his father on his back and fled to the borders of the sea. Dwelling there in obscurity, and rejoicing that he had saved the life of his parent, he would have forgotten that he ever filled a throne."

Mencius, who formulated the doctrines of his school, goes in this passage a step beyond the teachings of his Master. The latter confined the duty of a child toward a parent, guilty of a crime, to the passive part of concealment. The former gives it an active form,—requiring a son, on behalf of a parent, to do all in his power to defeat the ends of justice. But when, in this dilemma, he sets himself in opposition to the law, he is no longer fit to be a prince; he should abdicate the throne, to win

the crown of filial piety; for, according to Mencius, filial duty primes all others.

A case, analogous to the first of these, forms the subject of *Euthyphron*, one of the Dialogues of Plato. Socrates, going to the court of King's Bench, meets Euthyphron, and learns with horror that he has come for the express purpose of denouncing his own father as guilty of a capital crime.

A hired laborer, having killed another in a drunken brawl, the father of the accuser had him bound hand-and-foot and thrown into a pit, where the next morning he was found dead. Euthyphron saw in the hapless victim, not a chattel or a broken tool, but a fellow-man unjustly slain; while, in the murderer, he recognized, not a parent, but a criminal.

There is something chivalrous and noble in his taking up the cause of humanity, in opposition to the narrower claims of family. But it detracts from his merit that he is fully conscious of the *beau rôle* which he has assumed.

Socrates, who as usual expresses the sentiments of the author, is not dazzled by this splendid instance of public virtue triumphing over private feeling. After passing the ideas and motives of the hero through the sieve of his dialectic, he shows him that those instincts which he despises are the voice of nature; and that, in spite of his assumption of superior knowledge, he neither knows what he is to believe concerning the gods, nor what duty the gods require of him.

"The victim," said Socrates, "must have been one of your near relatives; otherwise, you would not have been able to overcome your natural repugnance to denouncing your father."

"Nothing is more ridiculous," Euthyphron replied, "than to suppose that it makes any difference whether

the victim is a relative or a stranger. The whole question is, whether the homicide was justifiable or not. If it was not, then it was my duty to denounce the perpetrator, no matter how closely connected with me; for it would be contamination to associate with such a person, instead of clearing myself by denouncing him." "My relations," he adds, "view this proceeding as impious and unholy; not knowing the nature of the gods, nor the real distinction between things holy and unholy."

"But," asked Socrates, "are you sure that *you* understand the nature of the gods, and the distinction of holy and unholy? Tell me what you call holy and unholy."

"I," replied Euthyphron, "call that holy which I am now doing;—namely, the denouncing of a wrong-doer who commits sacrilege, murder, or other grave offense,—no matter whether the offender be father, mother, or other relative. It would be unholy to refrain from doing so."

In support of this position, he appeals to the example of Zeus, the "best and most just of the gods," who chained and mutilated his father, as a punishment for his monstrous cruelties.

Socrates repeats his demand for a definition; and Euthyphron answers that the holy is that which pleases the gods, the unholy that which displeases them.

Soc.—"But what rule shall poor mortals have to go by when the gods are divided on these questions?"

Euth.—"They are never so much divided as not to be unanimous in support of the principle that he who commits an unjustifiable homicide ought to be punished."

Soc.—"But what is to be done when they are not agreed as to the quality of a crime,—whether it was justifiable or not?"

As this is a frequent occurrence in human tribunals,

Euthyphron is forced to admit that it might also occur in the councils of the gods; and he modifies his definition by inserting the word "all," so as to make an act holy or unholy according as it is loved or hated by all the gods. Here Socrates pushes him into deeper water by asking whether such act is holy because it is loved by the gods, or loved because it is holy?

To this Euthyphron is unable to make any satisfactory answer; and, after a brief skirmish on other points, he drops the discussion.

Through all its mazes, Socrates had pursued him as the Furies pursued Orestes, showing him that the dictates of nature are the basis of our notions of right and wrong; and that, to outrage our best instincts as he is doing, is to fight against the gods. Like the Chinese philosophers, he teaches that a son is not at liberty to assume the attitude of public prosecutor as against a parent.

The prolixity of the Socratic dialogue, of which I have given only a brief outline, is in strong contrast with the sententiousness of the Confucian school. But, not only is the subject of discussion identical; the name Euthyphron "straight thinker," is singularly similar to the *chih jen*, or "straight man," of the Chinese.

VII

CHINESE PROSE COMPOSITION

A PROFESSOR of Chinese in America is reported to have said that "in the Chinese language there is no such thing as a florid style or a beautiful style. Style is not taken into consideration. It is in writing the language that skill is displayed; and the man that executes the characters with dexterity and ingenuity is the one that understands the language."

Though somewhat unexpected as coming from the chair of a professor, this opinion is not novel. It expresses but too truly the estimate in which the literature of China has been generally held by the learned world.

The value of Chinese records is fully conceded. The great antiquity of the people; their accurate system of chronology; their habit of appealing to history as a tribunal before which they can arraign their sovereigns; and especially their practice of noting as a prodigy every strange phenomenon that occurs in any department of nature—all conspire to render their annals an inexhaustible mine of curious and useful information.

It is in these that our savants may find, extending back in unbroken series for thousands of years, notices of eclipses, comets, star-showers, aerolites, droughts, floods, earthquakes, etc., as well as a comparatively faithful account of the rise and fortunes of the most numerous branch of the human family.

But, while admitting that it is worth while to encounter all the toil of a difficult language in order to gain access

to such a field of research, who ever dreams that the Chinese language contains anything else to repay the labor of acquisition? Who ever imagines that in pursuing his favorite game, instead of traversing deserts and jungles, he will find himself walking among forests filled with the songs of strange birds and perfumed with the fragrance of unknown flowers, while ever and anon he is ravished by the view of some landscape of surpassing beauty? As soon would the student of literary art expect to find the graces of diction among the hieratic inscriptions of Egypt, or the arrow-headed records of Assyria, as to meet them on pages that bristle with the ideographic symbols of China. It is with a view to correcting such prevalent impressions that this paper is written. In attempting this, however, I do not propose a disquisition on the value of Chinese literature in general, nor commit myself to the task of elucidating the principles of its rhetoric and grammar; but limit myself rather to the single topic of style, and more particularly the style of its prose composition.

This is a subject, which, I am aware, it will not be easy to discuss in such a manner as to render it intelligible or interesting to those who are unacquainted with the Chinese language. Style is a volatile quality, which escapes in the process of transfusion; and illustrations of style, however carefully rendered, are at best but as dried plants and stuffed animals compared with living nature. Chinese, moreover, being from our idiom the most remote of all languages, suffers most in the process of rendering. I fear, therefore, that the best versions I may be able to offer will only have the effect of confirming the impressions which it is my object to combat. That such impressions are erroneous ought to be apparent from the mere consideration of the antiquity and extent

of the Chinese literature. For, to suppose that a great people have been engaged from a time anterior to the rise of any other living language in building up a literature, unequalled in extent, which contains nothing to gratify the taste or feed the imagination, is it not to suppose its authors destitute of the attributes of our common humanity? Are we to believe that the bees of China are so different from those of other countries that they construct their curious cells from a mere love of labor, without ever depositing there the sweets on which they are wont to feed?

It is not always true that external decoration implies internal finish or furniture; still, we may assert that it would be impossible that the taste which the Chinese display in the embellishment of their handwriting and letterpress should not find its counterpart in the refinements of style.

They literally worship their letters. When letters were invented, they say, heaven rejoiced and hell trembled. Not for any consideration will they tread on a piece of lettered paper; and to foster this reverence, literary associations employ agents to go about the streets, collect waste paper, and burn it on a kind of altar with the solemnity of a sacrifice. They execute their characters with the painter's brush, and rank writing as the very highest of the fine arts. They decorate their dwellings and the temples of their gods with ornamental inscriptions; and exercise their ingenuity in varying both chirography and orthography in a hundred fantastic ways. We may well excuse them for this almost idolatrous admiration for the greatest gift of their ancestors, for there is no other language on earth whose written characters approach the Chinese in their adaptation to pictorial effect.

Yet all this exaggerated attention to the mechanical art

of writing is but an index of the ardor with which Chinese scholars devote themselves to the graces of composition.

Their style is as varied as their chirography, and as much more elaborate than that of other nations. If they spend years in learning to write, where others give a few weeks or months to the acquisition of that accomplishment, it is equally true that, while in other countries the student acquires a style of composition almost by accident, those of China make it the earnest study of half a lifetime.

While, in the lower examinations, elegance of mechanical execution, joined to a fair proportion of other merits, is sure to achieve success, in competition for the higher degrees the essays are copied by official clerks before they meet the eye of the examiner; style is everything, and handwriting nothing. Even the matter of the essay is of little consequence in comparison with the form in which it is presented. This is perceived and lamented by the more intelligent among the Chinese themselves. They often contrast the hollow glitter of the style of the present day with the solid simplicity of the ancients; and denounce the art of producing the standard *wen chang*, or polished essay, as no less mechanical than that of ornamental penmanship. The writer has heard an eminent mandarin who himself wielded an elegant pen, speak of the stress which the literary tribunals lay on the superficial amenities of style as a "clever contrivance adopted by a former dynasty to prevent the literati from *thinking too much*." *

Still, however sensible to its defects, Chinese scholars, without exception, glory in the extent and high refine-

* The use of *wen chang* as an official test is ascribed to Wang An Shih of the Sung dynasty, about 1050.

ment of their national literature. "We yield to you the palm of science," one of them once said to me, after a discussion on their notions of nature and its forces; but he added, "You, of course, will not deny to us the meed of letters."

The Chinese language is not so ill adapted to purposes of rhetorical embellishment as might be inferred from its primitive structure. Totally destitute of inflection—its substantives without declension, its adjectives without comparison, and its verbs without conjugation—it seems at first view "*sans* everything" that ought to belong to a cultivated tongue. Bound, moreover, to a strict order of collocation, which its other deficiencies make a necessity, it would seem to be a clumsy instrument for thought and expression. Nor do I deny that it is so in comparison with the leading languages of the West; but it is a marvel how fine a polish Chinese scholars have made it receive, and what dexterity they acquire in the use of it. It possesses, too, some compensating qualities. Its monosyllabic form gives it the advantage of concentrated energy; and if the value of its words must be fixed by their position, like numerals in a column of figures, or mandarins on an occasion of state ceremony, it makes amends for this inconvenience by admitting each character to do duty in all the principal parts of speech. In English, we find it to be an element of strength to be able to convert many of our nouns into verbs. In Chinese, the interchange is all but universal. It is easy to perceive how much this circumstance must contribute to variety and vigor of expression, as well as to economy of resources.

The truculent advice which Han Yu gives as to the treatment of the Buddhist priesthood is *jen ch'i jen, lu ch'i chü, huo ch'i shu*; literally, *man their men, house their*

temples, fire their books—an expression of which all but the last clause is as unintelligible as the original Chinese. To the Chinese reader it means “make laity of their priests, make dwelling houses of their sacred places, and burn their books.” In its native form it is as elegant as it is terse and forcible.

Before all things, a Chinese loves conciseness. This taste he has inherited from his forefathers of forty centuries ago, who, having but a scanty stock of rude emblems, were compelled to practise economy. The complexity of the characters and the labor of writing confirmed the taste; so that though the pressure of poverty is now removed, the scholar of the present day, in regard to the expenditure of ink, continues to be as parsimonious as his ancestors. While we construct our sentences so as to guard against the possibility of mistake, he is satisfied with giving the reader a clue to his meaning. Our style is a ferry-boat that carries the reader over without danger or effort on his part; the Chinese is a succession of stepping-stones which test the agility of the passenger in leaping from one to another.

The Chinese writer is not ignorant of the Horatian canon, that in “striving after brevity he becomes obscure;” but with him obscurity is a less fault than redundancy. Accordingly, in Chinese, those latent ideas, to which a French writer has lately drawn attention, play an important part.* In return for a few hints, the reader

* To say that latent ideas form an essential, often a principal, part of human speech is as much a paradox, and yet as true, as to affirm that in reading we depend on the absence of light, and that the printed letters do not impress the eye. In case of an inscription lit up by an electric current, the metallic letters, though necessary to convey the fluid, remain invisible, and we see only the illuminated intervals. The greater the interstices consistent with the passage of the spark, the more brilliant the effects.

himself supplies all the links that are necessary for the continuity of thought. This intense brevity is better adapted to a language which is addressed to the eye than it would be to one which is expected to be equally intelligible to the ear. Light is quicker than sound. *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem.*

Next to conciseness, or perhaps in preference to it, the Chinese writer is bound to keep in view the law of symmetry. He loves a kind of parallelism; but it is not that of the Hebrew poets, whose tautology he abhors. It may consist of a simile; but more frequently it merely amounts to the expression of correlated ideas in nicely corresponding phrases. Every sentence is balanced with the utmost precision; every word has its proper counterpoise, and the whole composition moves on with the measured tread of a troop of soldiers.

Dr. Johnson's famous parallel between Pope and Dryden, and the studied antitheses of Lord Macaulay, are quite in accordance with the taste of the Chinese. When they meet with such a passage in a foreign book, they usually exclaim, "This writer knows something of the art of composition." And where, in addition to a superfluity of words, they find, as they often do, a neglect of this cardinal principle, they do not fail to express their disgust.

A difficulty in rendering the Christian Scriptures is that the translator is not at liberty to measure off his periods according to the canons of Chinese taste; and he not unfrequently gives unnecessary offence by retaining all the circumstances of gender, number, and tense where the sense does not require them, and where the genius of the Chinese language and the rules of Chinese rhetoric alike reject them. In this respect, the earlier translations were particularly faulty. Of the more recent ver-

sions, one at least (that of the Delegates) is distinguished for classical taste.

In such a task, the distinction between the *Dolmetscher* and the *Uebersetzer* which Schleiermacher has so clearly drawn should always be kept in view. For, difficult as is the task of translating out of a foreign language, that of translation into it is still more so; and still more essential is it that the translator be thoroughly imbued with its spirit. He must himself be in a manner naturalized, in order that his literary offspring may enjoy the privileges of citizenship.

The bane of Chinese style is a servile imitation of antiquity. This not only confines the writer within a narrow circle of threadbare thoughts; it has the effect of disfiguring modern literature by spurious ornaments borrowed from the ancients. The authors of the Thirteen Classics are canonized. Infallible in letters as in doctrine, every expression which they have employed becomes a model, or rather, I should say, a portion of the current vocabulary. But, like the waters of the Ching and Wei, the diverse elements refuse to mingle, giving to the most admired composition a heterogeneous aspect which mars its beauty in our eyes as much as it enhances it in those of the Chinese. A premium is thus placed on pedantry, and fetters are imposed on the feet of genius. The peculiar dialect which we sometimes hear from the pulpit, made up of fragments of the sacred text skilfully incorporated with the language of every-day life, may serve as an illustration of this singular compound.

In spite of this imitation of antiquity, they are, age after age, insensibly drifting away from their standard. A law of movement seems to be impressed on all things, which even the Chinese are unable to resist. By consequence, each century in their long history, or, more

properly, each dynasty, has formed a style of its own. The authors of the Chou, Han, T'ang, and Sung periods are broadly discriminated.

China abounds in literary adventurers of the stamp of Constantine Simonides, and the prevalent antiquity-worship affords them encouragement; but happily she has her critics too, as acute as Aristarchus of old.

The great schools of religious philosophy are also strongly differentiated in their style of expression. The Confucian, dealing with the things of common life, aims at perspicuity. The Taoist, occupied with magic and mystery, veils his thoughts in symbols and far-fetched metaphors. The Buddhist, to the obscurity inseparable from the imported metaphysics of India, adds an opaque medium by the constant use of Sanscrit phrases which are ill understood. Subdivisions of these great schools have likewise their peculiarities of style. Of these, however, I shall not speak, but hasten to indicate certain species of composition, each of which is characterized by a style of its own.

In no country are private correspondence, official despatches, and didactic and narrative writings distinguished by more marked peculiarities.

The style of epistolary intercourse, instead of approaching, as with us, to that of familiar conversation, is singularly stiff and affected. Whatever the subject, it is ushered in by a formal parade of set phrases, and finished off by a conclusion equally stereotyped and unmeaning. Form dominates everything in China. It is seldom that a letter flows freely from the heart and pen even of an able writer; and as for the less educated, though quite capable of expressing their own thoughts in their own way, they never think of such a thing as throwing off the constraint of prescribed forms. It is amusing to see

how carefully one who hears of the death of a relative culls from a letter-book a form exactly suited to the degree of his affliction. If the Chinese wrote love-letters (which they never do), they would all employ the same honeyed phrases; or, like Falstaff in the *Merry Wives*, address the same epistle to all the different objects of their admiration.

By way of sample, here is a "note of congratulation on the birthday of a friend."

"The Book of History lauds the five kinds of happiness, and the Book of Odes makes use of the nine similes. Both extol the honors of old age. Rejoicing at the anniversary of your advent, I utter the prayer of Hua Fêng; and, by way of recording my tally in the seaside cottage, I lay my tribute (the customary gift) at your feet, by retaining the whole of which you will shed lustre on him who offers it."

In this short note we have four classic allusions, two of which require a word of explanation. The prayer of Hua Fêng was for the Emperor Yao, that he might be blessed with a happy old age and numerous posterity. The "tally in the seaside cottage" refers to a legend in which one of the immortals says that he does not reckon time by years, but whenever sea and land change places, he deposits a tally. Those tallies now fill ten chambers.

The reply to the foregoing ran as follows:

"My trifling life has passed away in vanity, unmarked by a single trait of excellence. On my birthday especially this fills me with shame. How dare I, then, accept your congratulatory offerings? I beg to decline them, and, prostrate, pray for indulgence."

The official correspondence and state-papers of the Chinese are, for the most part, dignified, clear, and free

from those pedantic allusions with which they love to adorn their other writings. Whoever has read, even in the form of a translation, the memorials on the opium trade laid before the Emperor Tao Kuang, or the papers of Commissioner Lin on the same subject, cannot have failed to be struck with their manifest ability. Some of them are eloquent in style and masterly in argument. Imperial edicts are generally well written; but those of the Emperor Yung Ching are of such conspicuous merit that they are collected in a series of volumes and studied as models of composition.

The didactic style, whether that of commentaries on the classic texts or of treatises on science, morals, and practical arts, is always formed in accordance with the maxim of Confucius, *Tze ta erhi*, "Enough, if you are clear." Such writings are as lucid as the nature of the subject, the genius of the language, and the brain of the author will admit. The commentaries on the classics are admirable specimens of textual exposition.

The narrative style ranges from the gravity of history to the description of scenery and humorous anecdote. Its ideal is the combination of the graphic with simplicity. Of the historical writings of the Chinese, so far as their style is concerned, nothing more can be said than that they are simple and perspicuous. Interesting they are not; for their bondage to the annal and journal form has prevented their giving us comprehensive *tableaux*; while the idea of a philosophy of history has never dawned on their minds. In descriptions of scenery the Chinese excel. They have an eye for the picturesque in nature; and nature throws her varied charms over the pages of their literature with a profusion unknown among the pagan nations of the West. Chinese writers are particularly fond of relating incidents that are susceptible of a prac-

tical application. One such is the tiger apologue ascribed to Confucius in the preceding chapter.

Liu Tsung Yuan, of the T'ang period, has a similar narrative in which a poisonous reptile takes the place of the tiger. A poor man was employed to capture the spotted snake for medicinal purposes, and had his taxes remitted on condition of supplying the Imperial college of physicians with two every year. The author expressing his sympathy for his perilous occupation, the man replied, " 'My grandfather died in this way, my father also, and I, during the twelve years in which I have been so engaged, have more than once been near dying by the bite of serpents.' As he uttered this with a very sorrowful expression of countenance, 'Do you wish,' said I, 'that I should speak to the magistrates and have you released from this hard service?' His look became more sorrowful, and, bursting into tears, he exclaimed, 'If you pity me, allow me, I pray you, to pursue my present occupation; for be assured that my lot, hard as it is, is by no means so pitiable as that of those who suffer the exactions of tax-gatherers.' "

I add a specimen, in the same vein, from Liu Chi, a writer of the Ming period, who flourished no more than five hundred years ago. "I saw," he says, "oranges exposed on a fruit-stand in midsummer, and sold at a fabulous price. They looked fresh and tempting, and I bought one. On breaking it open, a puff of something like smoke filled my mouth and nose. Turning to the seller, I demanded, 'Why do you sell such fruit? It is fit for nothing but to offer to the gods or to set before strangers. What a sham! What a disgraceful cheat!' 'Well were it,' replied the fruit-seller, 'if my oranges were the only shams.' And he went on to show how we have sham soldiers in the field, sham statesmen in the

cabinet, and shams everywhere. I walked away silently, musing whether this fruit-seller might not be, after all, a philosopher who had taken to selling rotten oranges in order to have a text from which to preach on the subject of shams."

The last two pieces, though separated from it by a space of from twelve to sixteen hundred years, are evidently modelled after the first. I have quoted them to show that Chinese writers are not always servile in their imitation, or timid in denouncing the corruptions of their government.

Another kind of style is that of the *wen chang*, or polished essay—a brief treatise on any subject, constructed according to fixed rules, and limited to seven hundred words. In our own literature it answers to short papers such as those of the *Spectator* and *Rambler*, which were so much in vogue in the last century—invariably ushered in by a classic motto, and expected to be a model of fine writing.

The production of these is the leading test of literary ability. The schoolboy writes *wen chang* as soon as he is able to construe the native classics; and the gray-haired competitor for the doctorate in the examinations at the capital is still found writing *wen chang*. In all the world there is no kind of literature produced in equal quantity—excepting, perhaps, sermons. Nor is their prodigious quantity their only point of resemblance to the productions of the Western pulpit. They always have a text from the sacred books, which they analyze in a most artificial manner, and uniformly reduce to eight heads. They aim at nothing beyond exposition, on the principle that the moderns can do nothing more than unfold the germs of ancient wisdom; originality is renounced, and, as already intimated, their chief adornment consists in

the artful interweaving of sacred and modern phraseology. Like the inlaid wares of the Japanese or the mosaic pictures of the West, the more numerous and minute their borrowed ornaments, the more are these compositions admired. Of no practical utility except as a mental gymnastic, the style of these essays exerts an influence through the whole range of literature. Indeed, the term which is commonly employed to cover the whole field of *belles-lettres* is no other than *wen chang*.

Here is an opening paragraph of an essay which took the first honor in a recent examination for the doctorate:

Subject—Good-faith and Dignity. “When we begin, we should look to the end. Good-faith and dignity of carriage should therefore be objects of our care. By faith we mean that our acts should respond to our promise; by dignity, that our bearing should be such as to repel any approach towards insolent familiarity. This is only attained by cherishing a sense of right, cultivating a regard for propriety, and at the same time maintaining a sympathy for our fellow-men. In this earthly pilgrimage, what we most desire is to escape the blame of being untrue. We choose our words with care, for fear we should be untrue to our fellows. We choose our actions with care, for fear we should be untrue to ourselves. We choose our companions with care, lest we should prove unfaithful to our friends or they should prove unfaithful to us. By so doing we can fulfil our obligations, maintain our dignity of character, and yet preserve inviolate our social attachments. Within, we shall have a heart that feels its self-imposed engagements as much as if it were bound by the stipulations of a solemn covenant; while without we shall wear an aspect that will command the respect of those who approach us.”

“Enough of such platitudes,” one will say, yet no trans-

lation can ever do justice to the subtle qualities which caused this performance to be crowned among seven thousand competitors. The delicate sutures which blend its various elements into an harmonious whole must, of course, like the wavy lines of a Damascus blade, disappear when cast into the crucible of the translator.

From what has been said of the style of schools, periods, and different provinces in the empire of letters, it follows that, notwithstanding their propensity for imitation, Chinese writers must be as strongly individualized as those of other countries. If gifted with original genius, they form a style of their own; if not, they produce in new and undesigned combinations the traits of earlier authors by whom they have been most deeply impressed.

Confucius professed to be an imitator, but he was eminently original. Direct, practical, and comprehensive, his thoughts are expressed in language at once concise and rhythmical—resembling as much as anything else those choice lines of Shakespeare which by their combined felicity of idea and expression have become transformed into popular proverbs. Whether, like the Hindoo *guru*, he threw them into this form as the text for his daily discourse, or whether they were reduced by his disciples, it is not in all cases easy to determine. But certain it is that, stripped of their attractive dress, whatever their intrinsic merit, they never could have attained such universal currency. The teachings of Confucius owe as much to style as those of Mahomet. The extent to which style was studied in his time we may infer from the account he gives us of the manner in which the elegant state-papers of the principality of Cheng were produced. They were the work of four men with long, strange names. One “drew out a rough draft,” a second “sifted the arguments,” another “added rhetorical em-

bellishments," and the fourth finished them by "polishing off the periods."

Lao Tse, a senior contemporary of Confucius, left his instructions to posterity in "five thousand words," cast in a semi-poetical mould. Obscure and paradoxical like Heraclitus of Ephesus, surnamed the Dark (a writer with whom it would not be difficult to trace other points of analogy besides their common partiality for enigma), his dark pages are illumined by many a flash of far-reaching light. Each of these great masters impressed his style on the school which he founded.

Mencius is Confucius with less dogmatism and more vehemence; while the wild fancy of Chuangtze reproduces the characteristics of Lao Tse in exaggerated proportions. With both, the current of their diction flows like a river, but in each case it wears the complexion of its distant source.

As another example of a contrast in manner, I may adduce two historians of the Chou period. Kung Yang Kao and Tso Chiu Ming both confine themselves to the rôle of expositors, taking the Confucian annals as their text; but the first often commences with a minute analysis of the text, while the other proceeds at once to a narrative of facts. The former, for instance, thus expounds the heading of a chapter:

Text—"First year, spring, royal first moon." "Why the first year? Because it was the commencement of a new reign. Why does he mention spring? Because the year began at that season. Why, in speaking of the month, does he prefix the word royal? To indicate that it was fixed by the Imperial calendar. Why refer to the Imperial calendar? To show that all the states are united under one sovereign," etc.

From Tso Chiu Ming I cite a passage which, whether

it do or do not exhibit any other peculiarity, will at least show the absence of interrogation marks.

Text—" *The Prince of Cheng conquers Tuan at Yen.*" Premising that the belligerents were brothers; that their mother had abetted the rebellion of Tuan the younger; and that the Prince, pronouncing against her a sentence of banishment, had taken a solemn oath never to see her again until they should both be under the ground, the historian continues, "The Prince soon repented of his hasty oath. The Governor of Ying Ku heard it, and came with a present. The Prince detained him to dine. Ying Ku put aside a portion of the meats. The Prince inquired the reason. Said Ying Ku, 'They are for my mother, who has never tasted such royal dainties.' 'You have a mother, then,' said the Prince; 'alas! I have none.' He then told him of his oath, at the same time informing him of his repentance.

" 'Why need your Majesty be troubled on that account?' exclaimed Ying Ku. 'If you will only make a subterranean chamber with two doors, and meet there, who will say that you have not kept your oath?'

"The Prince took the counsel, and, meeting his mother beneath the ground, they became mother and son as before. How perfect the piety of Ying Ku, who devised this plan!"

The great masters of style are a thousand years later than these last; and then we find philosophers, poets, and historians in such constellations as to make the dynasties of T'ang and Sung a Golden Age for Chinese letters. Then flourished such writers as Han Yu, surnamed the Prince of Literature; Li Pei, in whom the planet Venus was believed to be incarnate; the three Su, father and sons; and a host of others whose light has not yet reached our Western shores, and whose names it would be tedious

to recount. Their names, musical enough in the tones of their native land, are harsh to Occidental ears. What a pity they have not all been clothed in graceful Latin, like those of Confucius and Mencius! These sages, if they owe to their style in a great degree their popularity at home, are almost equally indebted for their fame abroad to the classical terminations of their names. Name is fame in more than one sense, and more than one language—in Chinese as in Hebrew; and it is obvious that in the Western world no amount of merit would be sufficient to confer celebrity on a man bearing the name of *K'oon*g *Footze*!

I refrain from further extracts. For reasons already given, no translation can do justice to the style of a Chinese writer; and a volume, instead of a brief essay, would be required to give an approximate idea of the other qualities of what the Chinese describe as their *elegant literature*.

It is on their poetry that they especially pique themselves; but, as I think, with mistaken judgment. For while their prose-writers, like those of France, are unsurpassed in felicity of style, their poetry, like that of France, is stiff and constrained. Like their own women, their poetical muses have cramped feet and no wings.

For variety in prose composition, the nature of the language affords a boundless scope. For, not to speak of local dialects, the language of scholars, or the written language, ranges in its choice of expressions from the familiar *patois* up to the most archaic forms. In China nothing becomes obsolete; and a writer is thus enabled to pitch his composition, at option, on a high or low key, and to carry it through consistently. There are, for example, three sets of personal pronouns that correspond to as many grades of style; while there are other styles

in which the personal pronoun is dispensed with, and substantives employed instead.

Founded on pictorial representation, the language is, in many of its features, highly poetical, the strange beauties with which it charms the fancy at every step, suggesting a ramble among the gardens of the sea-nymphs. Nor is it a dead language, though in its written form no longer generally spoken. It contains "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,"—writers whom the student will gladly acknowledge as worthy compeers of the most admired authors of the ancient West. I say "ancient," for China is essentially ancient. She is not yet modernized, and finds fitter parallels in pagan antiquity than in modern Christendom.

The time, I trust, is not far distant when her language will find a place in all our principal seats of learning, and when her classic writers will be known and appreciated.

VIII

CHINESE LETTER WRITING

IN no other language is the style of private correspondence so widely separated from that of official or public documents as in the Chinese. The latter, simple and direct in expression, eschews ornament, and aims chiefly at clearness and force; the former, artificial to the last degree, teems with trite allusions which are rather pedantic than elegant.

With us, in this as in so many other things, the reverse is not far from the truth. It is the official despatch that is cast in iron moulds; and the familiar letter is left free to take any shape the easy play of thought and feeling may impress upon it. Western authors accordingly sometimes choose to throw their compositions into the convenient form of epistles when they wish to invest them with the double charm of clearness and vivacity. By employing the form of letters, Pascal imparted to polemic discussion the grace and humor of the comic drama; while Swift and Junius availed themselves of the same weapon in their terrible attacks on the government.

Not so the Chinese: though necessity leads to the discussion of grave topics in the form of letters, and though the teachings of some of their ancient philosophers were communicated in the way of correspondence, no modern Chinese ever thinks of throwing his ideas into such a shape, any more than he would treat a grave subject under the form of the modern prize essay. Thoughtful men denounce the regulation essay as utterly useless; but they

never denounce the conventional style of letter-writing, though both have a family likeness. The reason is that the letter of friendship or business is a social necessity, and the literary ornament with which it is tricked out is deemed essential to save it from vulgarity.

In friendly correspondence the opening paragraphs are always consecrated to the expression of high-flown sentiments, real or assumed, and not unfrequently the falsetto pitch of the exordium is painfully sustained to the very close. Nothing is more offensive to our taste, or less calculated to encourage the labor of acquisition. If a letter contains any serious business, the foreign reader, if he does not, as in most cases, rely on a native teacher for explanation, finds that he can arrive at it by a process of elimination, i. e. by leaving out of account all the unintelligible rhetoric. But this is not merely unscholarly; it limits the use of correspondence, and shuts out the student (he does not deserve the name of student if willing to be shut out) from a department of literature which more than any other presents us with pictures of individual character and social life.

The student who desires to enter this field will find numerous private collections of more or less celebrity soliciting his attention. If any of them were from the pens of gifted women; and if the canons of Chinese taste (for the fault is not in the language) permitted them, like their sisters of the West, to write as they talk, he might, even in this department, verify the quaint old maxim, "The sweetness of the lips increaseth knowledge." But, alas! there is no Sévigné, who, by her brilliant gossip, can shed the dews of immortality, over the ephemeral intrigues of a court, and by her wit give a value to things that are worthless, as amber does to the insects which it embalms; there is no Wortley, who chats

with equal charm of literature and love; no Lady Duff Gordon, who, by her genius and enterprise, puts us in love with boat life and Bedouins.

The paths of epistolary literature, where the choicest flowers are dropped from female hands, are in China almost untrodden by female feet; and a reason gravely given for withholding from women the key of knowledge is that men are *afraid they will learn to write letters*. It is not nature, but man, that is ungenerous to the daughters of the East.

“ Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne’er unroll;
Chill *jealousy* repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.”

Nor, it must be confessed, is there any such indemnity in store for our student as the epistles of a moralizing Seneca; or the correspondence of a malignant and intriguing Walpole, which lifts the veil from the mysteries of contemporary politics, and from the writer’s own bosom, so that Macaulay ingeniously compares the flavor of the letters of the great minister to that of *patés de foie gras*, because derived from a disease of the liver in the animal that produced them. But as some of our most eminent poets, such as Dryden, Gray, and Cowper, have left behind them letters that are preserved as models of elegance, in which fancy and feeling are no less happily blended than in their poetical works, so we find that in China the list of distinguished letter writers is headed by the names of poets, showing that they enjoyed the favor of the *musa pedestris* as well as of her winged sisters.

The earliest collection of letters, or at least the most famous of those that are accepted as models of epistolary style, came from the pens of two celebrated poets of the

Sung dynasty, Su Tung P'o, and Huang T'ing Chien. Under the joint name of Su Huang Ch'ih Tu, though not properly a *Briefwechsel*, or correspondence between the two authors, it has ever since the battle of Hastings given law to this species of composition.

The stream of time, like that which floated the borrowed axe of the prophet, usually carries down the weightier matters, and deposits the less important as sediment; yet in this instance we have reason to regret that, like natural rivers, it has only brought down to us the lighter material on its surface. Both writers held high offices, and one of them was especially honored at the Imperial Court; but their letters have little to do with State policy; and the selection has obviously been made on the principle that if one of their merits is in the elegance of their form, another ought to be in the absence of facts. Still, even these shining husks, if carefully sifted, will be found to yield some grains of valuable information.

A book of letters of more modern date, and scarcely inferior in reputation, is the *Ch'ih Tu* of Hsiao Ts'ang, or *Sui Yuan*, as it is variously styled. The author, Yuan Mei, a native of Che kiang, won a seat in the Imperial Academy in the reign of Ch'ien Lung; and declining office, passed his life at Nanking, chiefly engaged in scholastic pursuits, boasting that for thirty years he never appeared at court.

Known mainly as a professor of *belles-lettres*, with pupils dispersed over several provinces, instead of collected into one lecture room, and communicating by post instead of *viva voce*, this worthy man has not merely left models of composition, but set an example, both as scholar and instructor, which is much admired though little followed.

A poet of refined taste, and not without talent, it is interesting to know that he gave instruction in the art of poetry to numerous ladies of high family and culture, making, from time to time, the circuit of the cities where they resided—a fact the rarity of which rather supports than invalidates the view above given of the deficiencies of female education.

There are numerous works passing under the general name of *Ch'ih Tu*, which were prepared expressly for form-books, and will repay perusal for that purpose. Of these I may mention the *Yen chi mu tan*, *Hai shang hung ni*, and *Liu ch'ing chi*; but they have not the additional recommendation of a history.

It is, however, with a view to drawing attention to a more recent collection that this article is written.

The *Tze Yuan Ch'ih Tu*, published at Peking a few years ago in four thin volumes, consists of a selection from the letters of Liu Chia Chu.

This is a name which, being unknown, carries no weight; and our author, like Hawthorne in one of his earlier works, might speak of himself as enjoying the distinction of being one of the obscurest men of letters in all China. A native of Hunan, he passed many years in the office of the Governor of Canton; a representative of that nameless but influential class who transact the business while their superiors enjoy the honors of official station.

During this period he wrote, he tells us, heaps of papers higher than his head, among which one might play hide-and-seek in more senses than one. Most of them were, of course, sent forth in the name of others, and the writer facetiously compares himself with a milliner who prepares the clothing for a bride, or a go-between who arranges for her nuptials. Of these he gives us none, unless, in-

deed, by surreptitiously changing their address and adapting them to his own use.

The most of his papers bear unmistakable marks of having been culled from his private portfolio; affording such incidental glimpses of life and manners that one is compelled to accept them as a genuine record—a portion of the writer's autobiography. This gives the work an element of interest of no mean order, and a value of its own, as a mirror held up to the face of Chinese life by the hand of a native. So frank, indeed, are its disclosures, so little care is taken to draw a veil over things that are deemed discreditable, that one might almost regard the work as belonging to the category of "confessions"—originated by St. Augustine, and rendered popular by Rousseau.

As to the literary merits of the performance, it is sufficient to cite the names of the two sponsors under whose patronage the author comes before the public—Kuo Sung Tao, Minister to England, and Wang K'ai Tai, the late enlightened governor of the Province of Fukien—each of them having filled the post of Governor of Canton, and employed Liu Chia Chu as a confidential secretary.

Other great names are invoked in a long list of laudatory notices; and some that we meet with incidentally in the course of the correspondence, such as Tseng Kuo Fan, Chiang I Li, Li Hung Chang, and Liu Ch'ang Yu, (viceroy of Yünnan and Kweichow), impart to it an air of historical truth that is much in its favor.

Without pausing longer to discourse about the book, let us open its pages and see what we shall find there.

To begin, we shall find a meteoric shower of allusions. This is the most prominent characteristic of this species of writing; and the primary object of the artifice is to

hide the nakedness of commonplace. Employed in excess or handled clumsily, it aggravates the evil by exposing the poverty of the writer, or substitutes the graver faults of pedantry and cant; used with skill and taste, it throws over the page a glitter of iridescent hues, or, it may be, contributes largely to the significance and force of language.

These allusions are of various kinds. Some suggest whole chapters of history; others bring up the words or actions of real or mythical personages; while others still, by a single word or phrase, cast a beam of light on some poetical tableau, which brings its entire effect to bear on the subject in hand. For instance, when Dryden says of Thais that,

“Like another Helen, she fired another Troy,”

what a crowd of teeming associations he condenses into the space of a single line! How much is expressed by such brief phrases as “a Barmecide feast,” “a Bellerophon letter,” “a Judas kiss!”

The Chinese language abounds in such; and no one can be said to understand the language who is not in some degree familiar with them. Then there are curt allusions of a purely literary kind—catch words which suggest any one of the three hundred classic odes, or refer to thousands of well-known passages in later literature. To these we may add a vocabulary of metaphorical words and phrases, the use of which is *de rigueur* in a certain style which makes it a point of taste not to call things by their right names. Thus the poet or the elegant letter-writer never speaks of copper cash, but calls them “green beetles;” a sheet of paper he calls “a flowery scroll;” an epistle is “a wild goose.” Husband and wife are *Ch'ang-sui*, “tenor and treble;” *K'ang-li*, “strength and

beauty ;" *Yuan-yang*, " duck and drake ;" and a hundred other pretty things, at the poet's option. A man is a prince and his wife a princess ; his house a palace and his children a phoenix brood. To repay the kindness of parents is to emulate the stork ; to return a borrowed article is to restore the gem ; a man of genius employed in a work of drudgery—as Charles Lamb in the India Office—is " a race-horse in a salt-wagon."

These are but a few specimens of a sort of dialect that has its own dictionaries without number or limit ; and of which every reader of Chinese is under the necessity of knowing something, if he does not master it. Perhaps the best key to it for any student, native or foreign, is a collection of *wen chang*, or of well-written letters, such as those of our obscure friend Liu Chia Chu. In dictionaries and cyclopædias, or in such a useful hand-book as Mayers' Chinese Reader's Manual, he will find gems arranged as in a mineralogical cabinet ; but in these compositions he meets them in their proper setting. The object of such works is to aid, not to supersede, the reading of difficult authors—as a certain learned Dutchman proposed to supersede Homer by presenting the Homeric archæology in a tabulated form.

We now proceed to the substratum of facts underlying the gold and tinsel of which we have been speaking. Of little importance in themselves, and not by any means thick-sown through these pages, they are still not devoid of interest as illustrations of character, personal and national.

It was from the letters of Cicero that Mr. Middleton drew the principal materials for his admirable life of the great Roman statesman. But the letters of Chu Futze or Su Tung P'o would furnish scanty materials for a history of their lives ; and meagre indeed are the out-

lines of biography which we are able to extract from the sentimental effusions of Liu Chia Chu.

Our author first drew his breath, and with it what poetic inspiration he possessed, amidst the mountain scenery of Southern Hunan, about the middle of the reign of Chia Ching (circa 1810). Born in a rustic village not far from the city of Hsin Hua, he came of a family distinguished for scholarship—a fact of which he never ceases to remind the reader; and there can be no doubt that he inherited talent, though his patrimony included little else.

Boasting somewhat of his early precocity, he hints at youthful dissipations as having proved fatal to his career as a scholar, and planted the seeds of unending regrets. He failed—probably from a defective chirography, as many a worthier man has done—to win the first or lowest degree in the civil-service examinations; and about the age of thirty he removed with his family to Canton, forgetting, it seems, to liquidate certain debts of honor.

Concerned in the conduct of a charity-school, Liu, thinking that charity ought to begin at home, “borrowed” a portion of the funds to meet his own necessities. Arrived at Canton, he learned with much regret that the slight liberty he had taken with its capital was likely to occasion the dissolution of the school. Against this he protests with much eloquence; but has nothing more substantial to encourage the good work than “promises to pay.” In this connection his reference to himself, as a good example of the benefits of education, is, to say the least, a little naïve.

After this, we are not surprised to find many epistles filled with complaints of poverty. He has work enough, but scant remuneration. Great men admire his genius,

and load him with compliments; but, like virtue, which he does not much resemble in any other respect, *laudatur et alget*.

From one friend he begs the loan of a "few hundred pieces of gold," from another he borrows a suit of decent apparel. Good models these letters for one who has much to do in the line of begging or borrowing!

All this time Liu's family is increasing at a rather alarming rate; not that he has any children born, but from time to time he takes a new beauty into his harem in the hope that children will follow. One is presented to him by a friend; another, not unnaturally, runs away, or, as he euphemistically terms it, "carries her guitar to another door."

A correspondent of comparatively severe morals expostulates with Liu on this seeming abandonment to a life of sensuality. The latter replies by drawing an affecting picture of an aged father who cannot die in peace without the joy of embracing a grandson!

At length his hopes are awakened only to meet with disappointment—one of his wives presenting him with a daughter. The little creature appears not to be altogether unwelcome, and, in fact, makes for herself a warm place in her father's heart; though he frequently alludes to her in uncomplimentary terms borrowed from the classic odes:

"A girl is born; in coarse cloth wound,
With a tile for a toy, let her lie on the ground," etc.

The spell broken, another of his ladies crowns his desires by giving him a son, whose advent is duly hailed by a flourish of trumpets, and further quotations from the Book of Odes:

“ A son is born ; on an ivory bed,
Wrap him in raiment of purple and red ;
Gold and jewels for playthings bring
To the noble boy who shall serve the king.”

In a few months this child of many hopes sickens and dies. The disconsolate father mourns deeply, and fills many sheets with melodious *tristia*.

About this time the doors of official preferment, before which he had been so long waiting (having failed to find the key in his earlier youth), began slowly to open before him. Appointed magistrate of a sub-district in the country, called Lo Kang, he contrived to send some one to act in his stead (subletting the profits of the position), while he remained at the provincial capital in the midst of the literary society which he loved so dearly.

Appointed to Kowloon, on the mainland opposite to Hongkong, Liu again finds excuses for not repairing to his post; and the governor, offended by his tardiness, cancels the appointment. After due penance, he is restored to favor and offered another post, such as Cæsar himself would have preferred to being the second man at Rome. Taught by experience, he lost no time in installing himself in his new yamen. Its roof leaks, its walls are crumbling, and all its apartments filled with rubbish; but, to compensate for all this, it contains a *throne*, which, if he had read Milton, he might have compared with that of the “anarch old” who ruled the realms of chaos.

Here he finds a new order of talents called into requisition: he has to deal with facts instead of words, and is evidently proud of the success with which he performs the functions of a judge—favoring us with one of his judgments as a model of its kind. It betrays, however, the fact that his right hand has not forgotten its cunning; that he continues to be a rhetorician in spite

of himself, and is more at home in reading a lecture than in pronouncing a sentence.

Unique among the rose-water productions of his epistolary pen, his report of this lawsuit reminds us that Liu has also given us a few specimens of another species of composition. In the course of his career he is sometimes assistant examiner, and sometimes appears in the character of a competitor; not, indeed, in the ordinary examinations, but in those special trials which expectant officers are required to pass at the provincial capital. On one of these occasions Liu's essays were endorsed by the high authorities in terms which placed them on a level with the best productions of the classic ages.

These eulogies he not only repeats in many of his letters, but favors his friends with copies of the fortunate papers, that they may judge for themselves whether the praise is merited; pleasing himself with the reflection that but for the injustice of the lower courts he might long since have worn the highest honors of the literary arena.

Liu's literary ability is duly recognized by a host of junior aspirants, who solicit copies of his essays, send presents on his fête-days, and institute theatricals in his honor. His moral character is more doubtful. A polygamist on principle, he disclaims the virtues of an ascetic philosopher in order to emulate the libertinism of certain dissolute poets. Had he, indeed, done nothing worse than fill his own cage with bright-winged songsters, he would have been walking too closely in the footsteps of saints and sages to attract attention. To vindicate for himself the reputation of being a free spirit—one that spurns what he denominates the "minor morals"—he mingles occasionally with the "soiled doves."

For this, his best apology is that the silly occupants of his own dove-cot are incapable of appreciating his genius;

while some of these unappropriated ones, like the *hetæraë* of Greece, had their charms enhanced by the advantages of education. He gives us a letter which he wrote to one of this class, with hypocritical morality recommending her to take refuge in a house of religion.

In an epistle to another friend, he gives us reason to suspect that even the vestals of Buddha were not sacred in his eyes; and that with him sacrilege was necessary to give the highest flavor to license. Freely unfolding his inner life, and trenching often on forbidden ground, it is something in his favor that he is always elegant and never indecent.

After this account of his morals, it would be useless to inquire for his religion. He says, indeed, very little on the subject. He alludes to a "Creator" more than once, but in language of studied levity, showing that to him the author of nature is not a "living God."

As to outward observances, he conforms to popular usage; he believes in fate, and, impatient to know its decrees, applies to a professional fortune-teller; in all these points only too true a type of the average literati of his country.

The boundary-line between friendly and official correspondence is not easy to trace. It is to the former that we confine ourselves in the present communication; but it will not be amiss to remark that much of the best writing in the Chinese language may be found on intermediate ground between formal business documents and friendly letters.

In this class of compositions, vaguely described as official letters, the grace of the polished epistle is often added to the directness and force of the despatch style—a happy combination, of which some of the best specimens may be seen in the published correspondence of

Hu Lin-Yeh, canonized under the title of Hu Wen Cheng Kung; and in that of Ch'en Wen Chung Kung, who, having won three times in succession the first literary honor of his province and of the Empire, received from that circumstance the sobriquet of Ch'en San Yuan, "Ch'en the Triple First."

IX

CHINESE FABLES

THE student of Chinese inquires in vain for any collection of native fables; and he feels their absence as a personal inconvenience when he recalls his obligations to Æsop and Phædrus, Lessing and La Fontaine, for alleviating the toil of his earlier studies in the classic languages of ancient and modern Europe. This deficiency is the more disappointing, as the constant occurrence of the words *pi fang* in our colloquial exercises leads us to expect to find the fields of literature thick-sown with every variety of similitude. Parables and allegories are, indeed, not wanting, but their congener, the fable, seems never to have existed, or in some mysterious way to have become well-nigh extinct.

Nor is this last supposition a mere fancy. We turn up from time to time what seem to be fossil fragments enough to give it, to say the least, as good a foundation as some scientific theories have to rest on. For what are those numerous proverbial expressions drawn from the habits of animals but the ghosts, or rather the skeletons, of vanished fables. But whether such originals ever existed, certain it is that nothing is more easy or natural than to expand these phrases into the full dimensions of the proper apologue.

Take, for instance, "the sheep in a tiger's skin," "when the hare dies the fox weeps," "he who nurses a tiger's cub will rue his kindness," etc. Do not these seem to point back to ancient fables as their source; just as we

know "the fox and the grapes," "the ass in a lion's skin," and other proverbial expressions current among us were derived from fables?

But how did such originals, supposing them to have existed, come to be lost? We reply, they were either never reduced to writing, or not written in a style adapted to the taste of the country. For ages past the Chinese have affected an extreme sententiousness in the style of their literary composition. This would naturally lead them to extract the living spirit and to reject the cumbersome form of such fables as might spring up in the humbler walks of their folk-lore. Thus they may have had their unknown Pilpays and their mute, inglorious *Æsops*.

At all events, the defect of which we are speaking was not occasioned, as some would have us infer, by a want of imagination. For Chinese literature, while it contains nothing that rises to the dignity of the epic muse, yet teems with the productions of a fertile fancy—metamorphoses as numerous (if not as elegant) as those of Ovid; fairy tales more monstrous than Grimm's; and narratives of adventure (generally accepted as sober history) as strange as those of Sindbad or Gulliver. It is, we repeat, a question of taste rather than talent; and this, we think, is borne out by the reception which the Chinese gave to Mr. Thom's excellent translation of *Æsop*, a work which, instead of finding its way into every household, is rarely to be met with even in the stalls of a bookseller. The mandarins suspected that wolves and bears were masks for dangerous doctrines and biting satire; while neither prince nor peasant has cared enough about the production to keep it alive.

As to talent, while we will not assert that the Chinese could have excelled in this department of literature, there

is proof, we think, that they are not wholly destitute of a capacity for it. This will be found in the following fables, derived from various sources, which we give by way of specimen, hoping that readers of Chinese will add to the number any that happen to come under their notice:

1. The King of Chu inquiring with some surprise why the people of the North were so frightened at the approach of Chou Hsi Hsü, one of his ministers replied as follows: "A tiger who happened to be preceded by a fox was greatly astonished to see all the animals running away from the fox, little suspecting that their terror was inspired by himself. It is not Chou, but your Majesty, of whom the people of the North are in dread."

2. "I may go out and play without any danger now," said a little mouse to its mother. "The old cat has become religious; I see her with her eyes shut, engaged in praying to Buddha."

Grimalkin's devotions, however, did not prevent her seizing the silly little creature as soon as it ventured near.

3. A tiger who had never seen an ass was terrified at the sound of his voice, and was about to run away, when the latter turned his heels and prepared to kick.

"If that is your mode of attack," said the tiger, "I know how to deal with you."

4. A tiger having clapped his paw on an unlucky monkey, the latter begged to be released on the score of his insignificance, and promised to show the tiger where he might find a more valuable prey. The tiger complied, and the monkey conducted him to a hill-side where an ass was feeding—an animal which the tiger, till then, had never seen.

"My good brother," said the ass to the monkey,

"hitherto you have always brought me two tigers, how is it that you have only brought me one to-day?"

Hearing these words, the tiger fled for his life. Thus a ready wit may often ward off great dangers.

5. A tiger, finding a cat very prolific in devices for catching game, placed himself under her instruction. At length he was told there was nothing more to be learned. "Have you, then, taught me all your tricks?" he inquired. "Yes," replied the cat. "Then," said the tiger, "you are of no further use, and so I shall eat you." The cat, however, sprang lightly into the branches of a tree, and smiled at his disappointment. She had not taught him *all* her tricks.

The Chinese apply this to their foreign instructors in the art of war, and evidently suspect that some master secret is always held in reserve.

X

NATIVE TRACTS OF CHINA

THE word "tract," in its more general sense, signifies a treatise on any subject. In the special sense, which the activity of our Tract Societies has brought into use, it means a small book in which the sanctions of religion are brought forward in support of morality. Its aim is to enlighten the human mind, and to purify the widening stream of human life.

That the people of that ancient empire, who have anticipated us in so many discoveries, and in every kind of social experiment, should have gone before us in the creation of a tract-literature, is not surprising. In China, as in other countries, one of the earliest uses of written speech was to extend the influence of good men, by causing their words to reach a wider circle, beyond the bounds of personal intercourse, which in space is limited to a few miles, and in time to a few years.

For the same reasons, one of the first applications of the art of printing, in which China was six hundred years in advance of Europe, was to multiply tracts; and the aggregate mass of its publications in this department has, in the course of ten centuries, attained an enormous development. To enumerate even the most popular of them would necessitate the recitation of a long catalogue; and to offer an outline criticism of each would be an endless task. They fall, however, into certain well-defined categories, such as:—

1.—Those which inculcate morality in general.

2.—Those which persuade to the practice of particular virtues.

3.—Those which seek to deter from particular vices.

4.—Those that are written in the interest of particular religions or divinities.

One or two in each class, as types of the whole will be sufficient to exhibit their character and scope.

In the first class, a leading place might properly be assigned to the discourses of Confucius and Mencius, and to numerous treatises of later philosophers; but, as we are accustomed to make a distinction between scriptures and tracts, these, or at least those first mentioned, are to be regarded as the sacred scriptures of the Chinese.

With us, many tracts consist almost entirely of Scripture passages, selected and arranged. In the native literature of the Chinese, similar tracts based on their best books may be found in great numbers.

One such is called the *Ming Hsin Pao Chien*,—*Mirror of the Heart*. It contains a choice collection of the best sayings of the best men that country has produced. Those sayings are gems, neatly cut, highly polished, and sparkling with the light of truth. In other tracts they may be differently arranged; but everywhere they shine with the mild radiance of wisdom and virtue.

A collection of this kind, called *Ming Hsien Chi*,—*Sayings of the Wise*, is a great favorite in Peking. It differs from the tract last named in drawing its wise saws chiefly from modern sources. It opens with the noble maxim:—"Only practice good works, and ask no questions about your future destiny." The first chapter ends with the encouraging assurance:—"Human desires *can* be broken off; Heaven's laws *can* be observed."

Another maxim gives the general tenor of its teachings:—"All things bow to real worth; happiness is stored up by honesty." Every sentence is a proverb; and though, like the Hebrew proverbs, there are many that inculcate thrift and worldly wisdom, there are not a few that rise to a higher level. Its religion is unhappily of a very colorless description,—contrasting strongly with the doctrine of direct responsibility to a living God, which pervades the proverbs of the Jews,—making their religion the most practical of their concerns. The idea of direct responsibility is not indeed altogether wanting, though in this class of tracts it is not sufficiently insisted on. In this, and in nearly all similar collections, we find the warning that—

"The gods behold an evil thought,
As clearly as a flash of lightning;
And whispers uttered in a secret place,
To them sound loud as thunder."

The *Family Monitor* of Chu Po Lu so well known, sets forth an admirable system of precepts for the ordering of a household, in which children are brought up with judicious severity, and servants treated with considerate tenderness,—purity and honor being vital elements of the domestic atmosphere.

The *Ti Tze Kuei*, or *Guide to the Young*, though less known, is a book of a higher order. Composed almost in our own times, in imitation of the far-famed *Trimetrical Classic*, it surpasses its model, and shows, if we may judge by words alone, that the line of sages is not yet extinct. In the second chapter, entitled *Truth and Virtue*, we find a doctrine too rarely taught in Chinese books:—

"In every word you utter,
Let truth be first;

Deceit and falsehood,
How can you endure!

Do not lightly speak
Of what you do not certainly know;
Things not right,
Do not lightly promise;
If you do promise,
Whether you go forward or go back,
You are equally in fault."

Here is a neat definition:—

"To do wrong without intention
Is an error;
To do wrong with purpose
Is a crime."

The author adds:—

"Your errors, if you correct them,
End in no error;
If you hide or cloak them,
You add one sin more."

The Sacred Edict, containing the maxims of Kang Hsi amplified by Yung Cheng, is not too large to be classed with tracts. Each chapter may, indeed, be regarded as a tract on a special subject. Nothing gives a better view of the kind of morals inculcated by the head of the government—morals which harmonize in a wonderful manner with some of the teachings of Christianity.

The tracts that I have mentioned emanate from the school of pure Confucianism. They are not irreligious, for they everywhere admit the supremacy of a vague power called Heaven. They admit, further, that that power, whatever it may be, is not indifferent to human conduct.

Does not the venerable *Book of Changes*, the most ancient of the canonical writings, expressly declare that—

“On those who store up righteousness,
Heaven sends down a hundred blessings;
And on those who store up ill-desert,
Heaven sends down a hundred woes.”

This sentence re-appears in all these tracts; and the doctrine of a providential retribution, unfailing for the good, unrelenting for the evil, is affirmed, amplified, and illustrated, as a cardinal truth which no man can doubt. By this school it is taught, as it was by the Sadducees of Judea, without reference to hopes or fears connected with a belief in a life to come. The certainty of prosperity in this world as the reward of virtue, and of shame and suffering as the penalty of vice, is the motive most constantly appealed to, though it should not be forgotten that, in a passage already quoted, a sublimer conception is set forth:—“Only do good, and ask no questions as to your future destiny,”—assuring us that some among the moralists of the pure Confucian school might unite with us in the petition of Pope’s *Universal Prayer*—

“What conscience tells me should be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heaven pursue.”

The experience of moralists in China coincides, however, with that of the West in showing that the theory of virtue as its own reward is too refined for the mass of mankind. One, here and there, who is moulded of purer clay, may be seized with a kind of Platonic passion for virtue, but the great majority are so constituted that to them virtue has no charms aside from happiness. Nor

is this of necessity an ignoble sentiment ; for, in this case, what God has joined together it may not be possible for man to put asunder,—“Happiness (to quote a Chinese saying), follows in the footsteps of virtue, as shadow follows substance.” Are we not told that even Moses had “respect unto the recompense of the reward?”

When Buddhists imported from India a distinct notion of a future life, their doctrine of transmigration was first adopted by the Taoists, and afterwards accepted by many who never ceased to call themselves disciples of Confucius. All parties felt that an immense reinforcement was added to the sanctions of morality. Instead of the shadowy idea of a vicarious recompense, reserved for one's posterity in some remote age, came the conviction that each individual soul, sooner or later, inevitably reaps the reward of its deeds;—a conviction which took so strong a hold on the public mind as to become the foundation for a mixed school of moral teaching.

In the tracts of this mixed school, Confucianism may in some cases be the leading element, Taoism or Buddhism in others ; but the most powerful argument to incite to good, and deter from evil, is always the certainty of retribution in a future life.

The two most celebrated tracts in this department, if not in the whole cycle of Chinese literature, are distinctly on the subject of retribution. They are the *Kan Ying P'ien*, and the *Yin Chi Wên*. Each bears the name of a Taoist divinity,—one goes under the auspices of Laotze, the other under those of Wên Ch'ang. One sets out with the declaration that “Happiness and Misery never enter a door until they are invited by the occupant of the house.” “They are the reward that follows good and evil, as surely as a shadow follows a body.” The other begins with a statement that its beatified author

practised virtue through no fewer than seventeen lives or stages of existence before he attained to perfect felicity. Starting from this point, each unfolds its text with admirable skill, building a rainbow arch of virtues, with one foot resting on the earth, and the other lost in the blue of heaven; while the vices are depicted in fiery colors, on a back-ground of utter darkness.

While on this branch of the subject, a very vulgar tract ought to be noticed, which has perhaps a wider currency than either of the preceding. Like them, the *Yü Li Ch'ao Chuan*, or *String of Pearls*, is devoted to the doctrine of retribution. Instead, however, of insisting on true morality, this treatise spends its force in clothing the infernal world with imaginary horrors. They are drawn in such colors that they are not Dantesque, but grotesque. The letter press is accompanied by pictorial illustrations, in which one sees a soul in the process of being sawn in twain, or pounded in a mortar; a bridge from which sinners are precipitated into a field of up-turned sword points; a cauldron of boiling water in which they stew and simmer for ages; then a bed of ice on which they freeze for an equal period; together with other scenes equally adapted to bring a wholesome doctrine into contempt.

An idea, to which this gross view of retribution naturally gives rise, is that of opening a debt and credit account with the chancery of Heaven. Such account books form a distinct class of tracts. On one side are ranged all conceivable bad actions, each stamped with its exchange value according to a fixed tariff. The Chinese moralist has not, like Tetzels, gone so far as to convert this numerical valuation into a sale of indulgences, but we may be sure that the ingenuity of the reader does not fail to find out a way—

“To atone for sins he has a mind to,
By doing things he's not inclined to.”

The artifice of keeping with one's heart such an account current is one which, if properly conducted, might end in the practice of virtue. Franklin tried something of the kind with success, and he tells us that it enabled him to make such proficiency in the grace of humility that he *grew proud of it*. Among tracts of the second category—those that inculcate particular virtues—I may mention the *Hsiao Ching*, or *Manual of Filial Duty*, described in a previous chapter. More ancient than any of its class, it is also more venerated, being referred to Confucius himself, whose discourses on the subject were taken down by one of his most eminent disciples. While its origin is apocryphal, its fullness and perfection give it the weight of a classic, while the simplicity and beauty of its style make it specially attractive to the young, for whose instruction it was composed.

The teachings of the book culminate in the grand idea that filial piety, as the first of virtues, may be made a rule and regulator for the entire conduct of life. Every act has reference to our ancestors; good acts reflect honor, and bad acts bring disgrace on the name of our progenitors. The process of reasoning is somewhat similar to that which makes the love of God the law of a Christian life; but how feeble the sentiment that attaches itself to the moss-covered monuments of dead ancestors, in comparison with love to a living God, whom we are privileged to call our Father in Heaven!

As in China all social, political, and even religious obligations center in the duty of filial piety, that cardinal virtue is, as might be expected, the theme of innumerable hortatory compositions. Some of them are excellent from every point of view; but not a few are tinged with

extravagance, extolling the merits of children who have saved the lives of parents by mixing medicines with their own blood, or giving them broth made of their own flesh.*

There is one, and that the most popular of all, which sinks to a depth of silliness quite beyond anything attained by Mother Goose. I refer to the stories of the Four-and-Twenty Filial Children.

One of those worthies is held in remembrance because, when his parents had lapsed into second childhood, he, at the age of threescore and ten, dressed himself in parti-coloured vestments, and acted the clown to make them laugh. Another, when a little boy, was seen lying on the ice; and, when questioned as to his object, replied that he "wished to melt it to catch a fish for his mother." One of them, hearing a physician commend the virtues of milk freshly drawn from the teats of a wild deer, disguised himself as a deer in order to procure the precious beverage for his invalid mother. One of them, on the occurrence of a thunder storm, always threw himself on his mother's grave, saying—"Mother, your boy is with you, do not be afraid." The other stories are equally foolish, and some of them positively wicked; yet Chinese artists vie with each other in embellishing this precious nonsense, and the greatest men of China make a merit of writing out the text for engraving on wood.

Is it not probable that these exaggerated views of filial

* For this purpose the flesh is commonly taken from the fatty portions of the thigh; but a morsel of the liver is more efficacious. How young girls (for it is always women who do it) can perform on themselves an operation of such difficulty and survive is a mystery. Perhaps the best explanation is that such statements are figures of speech.

piety have had a tendency to dwarf other virtues, and to distort the moral character of the Chinese people? The duty of speaking the truth, for instance, so much insisted on by us of the West, is seldom touched on by the moral writers of China. While the foundation stone is neglected by these builders, what masses of wood, hay, and stubble, do they put in its place!

It would be easy to load a cart with separate treatises on the duty of showing respect to written or printed paper. Absurd as are the rhapsodies which Chinese scholars indite on this subject, may they not teach a lesson to our tract distributors,—the lesson not to show disrespect to their own cargoes of printed paper, by selling too cheaply, or giving too lavishly?

Then we have exhortations in equal quantity to compassion for brute animals. The radical sentiment is just and praise-worthy, but the writers rush into extremes as before; and, instead of nourishing a well-poised, active humanity to man, they make a merit of emancipating birds and fish, and of succoring ants that are struggling in the water. Under the influence of this literature, a society has been formed in Peking for the release of captive sparrows; but I have yet to hear that any society has been organized for the suppression of the sale of little children,—a traffic which is openly carried on in all the cities of China! Our own Cowper wept over a dead hare, and wrote the lines—

“I would not count upon my list of friends,
A man who wantonly set foot upon a worm.”

But his pity was not exhausted by such manifestations. He admitted man among the objects of his compassion, and sounded the note of anti-slavery long before the abolition of the trade in slaves:—

"Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same."

Against particular vices there are numerous tracts which are earnest and powerful. In some, the enormities of infanticide are set forth; some denounce the folly of gambling; others deal in scathing terms with licentious practices of every description; still others dissuade from opium-smoking, drunkenness, and the like.

Tracts of a distinctly religious type are neither so abundant, nor so highly esteemed, as those that aim to mend the morals of mankind. Yet they are not wanting;—one meets every day with little pamphlets commending the worship of particular divinities. Here is one that points out the way to obtain the favor of Chang Hsien, the greatest of the Taoist genii, who rewards his worshippers with the blessing of offspring. Here is another which consists chiefly of prayers to Kuan Tin, the goddess of mercy. The prayers are in Sanscrit, and utterly unintelligible to those who use them.

Of polemics there are very few,—indeed I have only seen one or two of modern origin. The earlier ages teemed with them; and the literati, by inserting in every collection of ancient essays, Han Yu's ferocious onslaught on Buddhism, seek to keep alive a feeling of animosity against the Indian creed. Time, however, is a great peace-maker. The conflicting elements, that once threatened to turn this celestial empire into primeval chaos, have gradually subsided into a stable equilibrium.

Antagonistic and mutually destructive, their teachings may be found mixed together in most of the tracts of which we have been speaking. In one of them, in a conspicuous place, at the head of a list of good actions,

stands the injunction—*Kuang Hsing San Chiao*, "Spread far and wide the Three Religions."

A little treatise full of deep thought, which shows to advantage the blending of the three creeds, is *Ts'ai Ken T'ien*. Its author, Hung Ying Ming, was a moralist of a high order, but nothing is known of him except that he lived about three centuries ago.

Philosophers tell us of a time, happily far in the future, when earth shall no more be the scene of terrific storms, —when north wind and south wind shall cease to contend for the mastery, because the atmosphere no longer receives sufficient heat from the sun to disturb its repose. It is the heat of conviction that engenders controversy. Where that has ceased, is there not reason to suspect that faith has lost its vitality, and that sincere convictions no longer exist?

In ancient Rome, the gods of the conquered nations came trooping into the capital; and all of them, in the lapse of time, were seated in friendly conclave in the pantheon of Agrippa. They were at peace, because they were dead. Lucian, in his satirical dialogues, deals with dead gods as well as with dead men; but those dead gods were galvanized into life by the contact of Christianity. Christ came into their midst, and, at his touch, their dry bones began to shake, and they rose up to do battle against the Lord of Life. History repeats itself. What we have seen in Rome, is now taking place in China. The calm of ages is disturbed, and the heat of controversy begins to show itself anew; but the only polemics from the pagan camp are those in which the adherents of the Three Religions combine in vituperative attacks on that arrogant creed which claims for itself the homage of the world.

Inert as are the creeds of paganism, in comparison with

the undying energies of our Holy Faith, it would be wrong to infer that they are either active for evil, or powerless for good. To those who have not the sun, star-light is oftentimes a precious guide.

In looking over a vast variety of native tracts, we are struck by the fact that authors of all the schools agree in seeking to fortify their moral teachings by the sanctions of religion. Even the Confucianists ascribe to their canonical books the authority of inspiration. Chu Futzé, sceptical as he was on most subjects, admitted the claim of the Confucian teachings to a superhuman origin. Later writers naturally sought to invest their productions with the sanctity derived from an inspired source. The two other creeds peopled the heavens with deified mortals. With them it was easy to hold communication, and from them oracular responses were obtained. If the divinities deigned to give prescriptions for the cure of measles or toothache, why not for the maladies of the human mind? The medium of response was planchette, an instrument known to the Chinese a thousand years before it began to make a figure in Europe. I have myself seen effusions in faultless verse, fresh from the pens of deified spirits.

In connecting religion with morals, these writers agree with us; for what a feeble thing would be a moral propaganda unaided by the fervor of religious faith!

One of the literary lights of the English firmament defines religion as "morality touched by emotion." The definition is neither logical nor complete; but it hits in happy phrase one feature of a union formed by two distinct things. Morality, to borrow the imagery of a Hebrew poet, springs up out of the earth, and religion looks down from Heaven. Morality is the body, cold and beautiful until religion, which is its soul, enters into

it and gives it life; or, in the words of Mr. Arnold, "touches it with emotion."

The love of God is religion; the love of man, morality. The two must be combined, in order to give the highest effect to an enterprise like that of our Tract Societies. The assertion may sound strange, but it is true nevertheless, that morality is our supreme object. If men were to persist in the debasing practices inseparable from heathenism, would we deem it worth while to substitute the names of Jehovah and Jesus for those of Kuan Ti and Buddha?

We should not fail to recognize how much has been done by the agency of native tracts to prepare the way for the tractarian crusade, in which we are now embarked. It is owing to them that our efforts in this direction meet with a respectful welcome. Let us, on our part, cultivate a sympathy for all that is good in native books and native methods, and endeavor to learn from them something that may enable us more efficiently to carry on our own enterprise.

That which we may study with most advantage is their mode of communicating instruction on religious and moral subjects. No missionary should undertake the composition of a Christian tract, without having first made himself acquainted with a wide range of native tracts. Not only may he learn from them how to treat his subject in a style at once concise and lucid,—respectable in the eyes of the learned, yet not above the comprehension of the vulgar,—what is more, he may learn from them the spiritual wants of the audience whom he proposes to instruct and relieve.

A weakness of the native tract lies in the fact that, for the most part, elegant as it may be, it contains nothing but what everybody knows. We, in the preparation

of our tracts, can draw on resources that lie beyond the reach of native authors. In addition to the inestimable treasures of Revealed Truth, we have Geography, History, Astronomy, Physics, to communicate,—not to speak of our improved systems of Mental and Moral Philosophy.

These sciences are not only powerful for the overthrow of superstition,—they are essential to the understanding of religious truth. Every new tract ought to contain more or less on these subjects; and some tracts should be entirely devoted to them, and to the religious applications of which they are so readily susceptible. Would it not be well for our Tract Societies to prepare a series—not of text-books, for that task has been undertaken by another association—but of primers, which, along with religious truth, shall impart the elements of science? By acting on this principle, our publications will be made in the highest sense an educational agency. They will command the respect of the better classes, and not only win them away from grovelling superstitions, but lead high and low away from their imperfect lights to Him who is the Light of the World.

BOOK III

Religion and Philosophy of the
Chinese

XI

THE SAN CHIAO, OR THREE RELIGIONS OF CHINA

THE religious experience of the Chinese is worthy of attentive study. Detached at an early period from the parent stock, and for thousands of years holding but little intercourse with other branches of the human family, we are able to ascertain with a good degree of precision those ideas which constituted their original inheritance, and to trace in history the development or corruption of their primitive beliefs. Midway in their long career, they imported from India an exotic system, completing the triad of their authorized creeds.

In their experience each of the leading systems has been fairly tested. The arena has been large enough, and the duration of the experiment long enough, to admit of each working out its full results. These experiments are of the greater value, because they have been wrought out in the midst of a highly organized society, and in connection with a high degree of intellectual culture.

In views and practices, the Chinese of to-day are polytheistic and idolatrous. The evidence of this strikes the attention of the voyager on every hand. In the sanpau that carries him to the shore, he discovers a small shrine which contains an image of the river-god, the god of wealth, or Kuan Yin (the goddess of mercy). His eye is charmed by the picturesqueness of pagodas perched on mountain-crags, and monasteries nestling in sequestered dells; and, on entering even a small town, he is surprised at the extent, if not the magnificence, of temples erected

to Ch'eng Huang, the "city defender," and Wen Ch'ang, the patron of letters. Heaps of gilt paper are consumed in the streets, accompanied by volleys of fire-crackers. Bonzes, modulating their voices by the sound of a wooden rattle, fill the air with their melancholy chant; and processions wind through narrow lanes, bearing on their shoulders a silver effigy of the "dragon king," the god of rain.

These temples, images, and symbols, he is informed, all belong to *San Chiao* (three religions). All three are equally idolatrous, and he inquires in vain for any influential native sect, which, more enlightened or philosophical than the rest, raises a protest against the prevailing superstition. Yet, on acquiring the language and studying the popular superstitions in their myriad fantastic shapes, he begins to discover traces of a religious sentiment, deep and real, which is not connected with any of the objects of popular worship—a veneration for T'ien, or Heaven, and a belief that in the visible heavens there resides some vague power who provides for the wants of men, and rewards them according to their deeds.

Personified as Lao T'ien Yeh—not Heavenly Father, as it expresses the Christian's conception of combined tenderness and majesty, but literally "Old Father Heaven," much as we say "Old Father Time"—or designated by a hundred other appellations, this august but unknown Being, though universally acknowledged, is invoked or worshipped only to a very limited extent. Some, at the close of the year, present a thank-offering to the Great Power who has controlled the course of its events; others burn a stick of incense every evening under the open sky; and in the marriage ceremony all classes bow down before T'ien as the first of the five objects of veneration.*

* The other four are the earth, the prince, parents, and teachers.



THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN



THE ALTAR OF HEAVEN

When taxed with ingratitude in neglecting to honor that Being on whom they depend for existence, the Chinese uniformly reply, "It is not ingratitude, but reverence, that prevents our worship. He is too great for us to worship. None but the Emperor is worthy to lay an offering on the altar of Heaven." In conformity with this sentiment, the Emperor, as the high priest and mediator of his people, celebrates in Peking the worship of Heaven with imposing ceremonies.

Within the gates of the southern division of the capital, and surrounded by a sacred grove so extensive that the silence of its deep shades is never broken by the noises of the busy world, stands the Temple of Heaven. It consists of a single tower, whose tiling of resplendent azure is intended to represent the form and color of the aerial vault. It contains no image, and the solemn rites are not performed within the tower; but, on a marble altar which stands before it, a bullock is offered once a year as a burnt-sacrifice, while the master of the Empire prostrates himself in adoration of the Spirit of the Universe.*

This is the high-place of Chinese devotion; and the thoughtful visitor feels that he ought to tread its courts with unsandalled feet.† For no vulgar idolatry has entered here: this mountain-top still stands above the waves of corruption, and on this solitary altar there still rests

* Another tower of similar structure but larger dimensions stands in a separate enclosure as a kind of vestibule to the more sacred place, and here it is that the Emperor prays for "fruitful seasons."

† Dr. Legge, the distinguished translator of the Chinese classics, visiting Peking some years after this was written, actually "put his shoes from off his feet" before ascending the steps of the great altar. Yet in 1900 this sacred spot was converted into a barracks for British troops!

a faint ray of the primeval faith. The tablet which represents the invisible Deity is inscribed with the name of Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler; and as we contemplate the Majesty of the Empire prostrate before it, while the smoke ascends from his burning sacrifice, our thoughts are irresistibly carried back to the time when the King of Salem officiated as "Priest of the Most High God."

The writings and the institutions of the Chinese are not, like those of the Hindus and the Hebrews, pervaded with the idea of God. It is, nevertheless, expressed in their ancient books with so much clearness as to make us wonder and lament that it has left so faint an impression on the national mind.

In their books of History it is recorded that music was invented for the praise of Shang Ti. Rival claimants for the throne appeal to the judgment of Shang Ti. He is the arbiter of nations, and, while actuated by benevolence, is yet capable of being provoked to wrath by the iniquities of men. In the *Book of Changes* he is represented as restoring life to torpid nature on the return of spring. In the *Book of Rites* it is said that the ancients "prayed for grain to Shang Ti," and presented in offering a bullock, which must be without blemish, and stall-fed for three months before the day of sacrifice. In the *Book of Odes*, mostly composed from eight hundred to a thousand years before the Christian era, and containing fragments of still higher antiquity, Shang Ti is represented as seated on a lofty throne, while the spirits of the good "walk up and down on his right and left."

In none of these writings is Shang Ti clothed in the human form or debased by human passion like the Zeus of the Greek. There is in them even less of anthropomorphism than we find in the representations of Jehovah

in the Hebrew Scriptures. The nearest approach to exhibiting him in the human form is the ascription to Shang Ti of a "huge footprint," probably an impression on some mass of rock. Educated Chinese, on embracing Christianity, assert that the Shang Ti of their fathers was identical with the T'ien Chu, the Lord of Heaven, whom they are taught to worship. Paul Hsiu, a member of the Hanlin Academy, and cabinet minister under the Ming dynasty, makes this assertion in an eloquent apology addressed to the throne in behalf of his new faith and its teachers.

There is no need of an extended argument, to establish the fact that the early Chinese were by no means destitute of the knowledge of God. They did not, indeed, know him as the Creator, but they recognized him as supreme in providence, and without beginning or end.

Whence came this conception? Was it the mature result of ages of speculation, or was it brought down from remote antiquity on the stream of patriarchal tradition? The latter, we think, is the only probable hypothesis. In the earlier books of the Chinese there is no trace of speculative inquiry. They raise no question as to the nature of Shang Ti, or the grounds of their faith in such a being, but in their first pages allude to him as already well known, and speak of burnt-offerings made to him on mountain-tops as an established rite. Indeed, the idea of Shang Ti, when it first meets us, is not in the process of development, but already in the first stages of decay. The beginnings of that idolatry by which it was subsequently almost obliterated are distinctly traceable. The heavenly bodies, the spirits of the hills and rivers, and even the spirits of deceased men, were admitted to a share in the divine honors of Shang Ti. The religious sentiment was frittered away by being directed to a mul-

tiplicity of objects, and the popular mind seemed to take refuge among the creatures of its own fancy, as Adam did amidst the trees of the Garden, from the terrible idea of a holy God.

The worship of the Supreme Ruler, grand as it is, is in the present day like a ray of the sun falling upon an iceberg, so far as its influence on the public mind is concerned. It is limited to the emperor and to a few remarkable and august manifestations of public ritual; but you do not find it in the household. You do not find it on the lips of the people. You do not find that God in that form has taken up his abode with men. He is still far remote, on the summit of an icy Olympus, as it were, although to a certain extent dimly perceived by the mind of the Chinese nation.

In order to understand the mutual relations of these three systems—in other words, to understand the religious aspects of China at the present day—it will be necessary to give separate attention to the rise and progress of each. We begin with Confucianism.

The Confucian system did not originate with Confucius. He took the records of remote antiquity and sifted them, in such wise, however, as to exert in a most effective manner the influence of an editor, giving to the readers of all succeeding ages only that which he wished to produce its effect on the national mind. We consequently date Confucianism from the beginning of his records,—from the time of Yao and Shun, his favorite models of virtue,—twenty-two centuries before the Christian era.

There are two classes of great men who leave their mark on the condition of their species—those who change the course of history without any far-reaching purpose, much as a falling cliff changes the direction of a stream;

and those, again, who, like skilful engineers, excavate a channel for the thought of future generations. Pre-eminent among the latter stands the name of Confucius. Honored during his lifetime to such a degree that the princes of several states lamented his decease like that of a father, his influence has deepened with time and extended with the swelling multitudes of his people. Buddhism and Taoism have both fallen into a state of irretrievable decay, but the influence and the memory of Confucius continue as green as the cypresses that shade his tomb. After the lapse of three and twenty centuries, he has a temple in every city, and an effigy in every school-room. He is venerated as the fountain of wisdom by all the votaries of letters, and worshipped by the mandarins of the realm as the author of their civil polity. The estimation in which his teachings continue to be held is well exhibited in the reply which the people of Shantung, his native province, gave to a missionary who, some fifty years ago, offered them Christian books: "We have seen your books," said they, "and neither desire nor approve them. The instructions of our Sage are sufficient for us, and they are superior to any foreign doctrines that you can bring us." *

Born B. C. 551, and endowed with uncommon talents, Confucius was far from relying on the fertility of his own genius. "Reading without thought is fruitless, and thought without reading dangerous," is a maxim which he taught his disciples, and one which he had doubtless followed in the formation of his own mind. China already possessed accumulated treasures of literature and history. With these materials he stored his memory, and

* Since that date a change has come over the people of Shantung. In no other province has Christianity met with so ready a reception.

by the aid of reflection digested them into a system for the use of posterity.

Filled with enthusiasm by the study of the ancients, and mourning over the degeneracy of his own times, he entered at an early age on the vocation of reformer. He at first sought to effect his objects by obtaining civil office and setting an example of good government, as well as by giving instruction to those who became his disciples. At the age of fifty-five he was advanced to the premiership of his native State; and in a few months the improvement in the public morals was manifest. Valuables might be exposed in the street without being stolen, and shepherds abandoned the practice of filling their sheep with water before leading them to market.

A singular circumstance led him to renounce political life. The little kingdom of Lu grew apace in wealth and prosperity; and the prince of a rival State, in order to prevent its acquiring an ascendancy in the politics of the Empire, felt it necessary to counteract the influence of the wise legislator. Resorting to a stratagem similar to that which Louis XIV. employed with Charles II., he sent instead of brave generals or astute statesmen, a band of beautiful girls who were skilled in music and dancing. The prince of Lu, young and amorous, was caught in the snare, and, giving the rein to pleasure, abandoned all the schemes of reform with which he had been inspired by the counsels of the Sage. Disappointed and disgusted, Confucius retired into private life.

Thwarted, as he had often been, by royal pride and official jealousy, he henceforth endeavored to attain his ends by a less direct but more certain method. He devoted himself more than ever to the instruction of youth, and to the collection of those monuments of ancient wisdom, which form the basis of his teaching. His fame

attracted young men of promise from all the surrounding principalities. No fewer than three thousand received his instructions, among whom five hundred became distinguished mandarins, and seventy-two of them are enrolled on the list of the sages of the Empire. Through these and the books which he edited subsequently to this period, there can be no doubt that he exerted a greater influence on the destinies of the Empire than he could have done had he been seated on the Imperial throne. He won for himself the title of *Su Wang*, "the unsceptred monarch," whose intellectual sway is acknowledged by all ages.*

Confucius understood the power of proverbs, and, incorporating into his system such as met his approval, he cast his own teachings in the same mould. His speeches are laconic and oracular, and he has transmitted to posterity a body of political ethics expressed in formulæ so brief and comprehensive that it may easily be retained in the weakest memory. Thus, *chün ch'en, fu tze, fu fu, hsiung ti, p'êng yu* are ten syllables which every boy in China has at his tongue's end. They contain the entire framework of the social fabric—the "five relations" of sovereign and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend, which, according to the Chinese, comprehend the whole duty of man as a social being. The five cardinal virtues—benevolence, justice, order, prudence, and fidelity—so essential to the well-being of society, Confucius inculcated in the five syllables *jen, i, li, chih, hsin*.

The following sentences, taken from his miscellaneous discourses, may serve as illustrations of both the style and the matter of his teaching:

* For an account of his family see Note II. at the end of this chapter.

"Good government consists in making the prince a prince, the subject a subject, the parent a parent, and the child a child."

"Beware of doing to another what you would not that others should do to you."

"He that is not offended at being misunderstood is a superior man."

"Have no friend who is inferior to yourself in virtue."

"Be not afraid to correct a fault. He that knows the right and fears to do it is not a brave man."

"If you guide the people by laws, and enforce the laws by punishment, they will lose the sense of shame and seek to evade them; but if you guide them by a virtuous example, and diffuse among them a love of order, they will be ashamed to transgress."

"To know what we know, and what we do not know, is knowledge."

"We know not life, how can we know death?"

"The filial son is one who gives his parents no anxiety but for his health."

Filial piety, Confucius taught, is not merely a domestic virtue, but diffuses its influence through all the actions of life. A son who disgraces his parents in any way is unfilial; one who maltreats a brother or a relative, forgetful of the bonds of a common parentage, is unfilial. This powerful motive is thus rendered expansive in its application, like piety to God in the Christian system, for which, indeed, it serves as a partial substitute. It is beautifully elaborated in the *Hsiao Ching*, the most popular of the Thirteen Classics.

Virtue, Confucius taught with Aristotle, is the mean between two vices, and this theory is developed by his grandson in the *Chung Yung*, the sublimest of the sacred books.

The secret of good government, he taught, consists in the cultivation of personal virtue on the part of rulers; and the connection between private morals and national politics is well set forth in the *Ta Hsüeh*, or Great Study.

This brief tractate is the only formal composition, with the exception of an outline of history, which the Great Sage put forth as the product of his own pen. "I am an editor, and not an author," is the modest account which he gives of himself, and it is mainly to his labors in this department that China is indebted for her knowledge of antecedent antiquity.

The spirit in which he discharged this double duty to the past and future may be inferred from the impressive ceremony with which he concluded his great task. Assembling his disciples, he led them to the summit of a neighboring hill, where sacrifices were usually offered. Here he erected an altar, and placing on it an edition of the sacred books which he had just completed, the gray-haired philosopher, now seventy years of age, fell on his knees, devoutly returned thanks for having had life and strength granted him to accomplish that laborious undertaking, at the same time imploring that the benefit his countrymen would receive from it might not be small. "Chinese pictures," says Pauthier, "represent the Sage in the attitude of supplication, and a beam of light or a rainbow descending on the sacred volumes, while his disciples stand around him in admiring wonder." *

Thales expired about the time Confucius drew his infant breath, and Pythagoras was his contemporary; but the only names among the Greeks which admit of comparison with that of Confucius are Socrates and Aristotle, the former of whom revolutionized the philosophy of

* Since reading this passage in Pauthier, I have myself seen this picture in a native pictorial biography of Confucius.

Greece, and the latter ruled the dialectics of mediæval Europe. Without the discursive eloquence of the one or the logical acumen of the other, Confucius surpassed them both in practical wisdom, and exceeds them immeasurably in the depth, extent, and permanence of his influence.

It is not surprising that when missionaries attempt to direct their attention to the Saviour, the Chinese point to Confucius and challenge comparison; nor that they should sometimes fail to be satisfied with the arguments employed to establish the superiority of Jesus Christ. But the thoughtful Christian who has studied the canonical books of China can hardly return to the perusal of the New Testament without a deeper conviction of its divine authority. In the Confucian classics he detects none of that impurity which defiles the pages of Greek and Roman authors, and none of that monstrous mythology which constitutes so large a portion of the sacred books of the Hindoos, but he discovers defects enough to make him turn with gratitude to the revelations of a "Greater Teacher."

Disgusted at the superstitions of the vulgar, and desirous of guarding his followers against similar excesses, Confucius led them into the opposite extreme of scepticism. He ignored, if he did not deny, those cardinal doctrines of all religion, the immortality of the soul, and the personal existence of God, both of which were currently received in his day. In place of *Shang Ti* (Supreme Ruler), the name under which the God of Nature had been worshipped in earlier ages, he made use of the vague appellation *T'ien* (Heaven); thus opening the way, on the one hand, for that atheism with which their modern philosophy is so deeply infected, and, on the other, for that idolatry which nothing but the doctrine of a personal

God can effectually counteract. When his pupils proposed inquiries respecting a future state, he either discouraged them or answered ambiguously, and thus deprived his own precepts of the support they might have derived from the sanctions of a coming retribution. Thus in a remarkable discourse reported in the *Chia Yu*—a collection the authority of which is not, however, above suspicion—he says, “If I should say the soul survives the body, I fear the filial would neglect their living parents in their zeal to serve their deceased ancestors. If, on the contrary, I should say the soul does not survive, I fear lest the unfilial should throw away the bodies of their parents and leave them unburied.”

We may add that, while his writings abound in the praises of virtue, not a line can be found inculcating the pursuit of truth. Expediency, not truth, is the goal of his system. Contrast with this the Gospel of Christ, which pronounces him the only freeman whom the “truth makes free,” and promises to his followers “the Spirit of Truth” as his richest legacy.

The style of Confucius was an ipse-dixit dogmatism, and it has left its impress on the unreasoning habit of the Chinese mind. Jesus Christ appealed to evidence and challenged inquiry, and this characteristic of our religion has shown itself in the mental development of Christian nations. Nor is the contrast less striking in another point. *Illius dicta, hujus facta laudantur*, to borrow the words of Cicero, in comparing Cato with Socrates. Confucius selected disciples who should be the depositaries of his teachings; Christ chose apostles who should be witnesses of his actions. Confucius died lamenting that the edifice he had labored so long to erect was crumbling to ruin. Christ’s death was the crowning act of his life; and his last words, “It is finished.”

It was a philosophy, not a religion, that Confucius aimed to propagate. "Our Master," say his disciples, "spake little concerning the gods." He preferred to confine his teachings to the more tangible realities of human life; but so far from setting himself to reform the vulgar superstition, he conformed to its silly ceremonies and enjoined the same course on his disciples. "Treat the gods with respect," he said to them, but he added, in terms which leave no ambiguity in the meaning of the precept, "keep them at a distance," or, rather, "keep out of their way." A cold sneer was not sufficient to wither or eradicate the existing idolatry, and the teachings of Confucius gave authority and prevalence to many idolatrous usages which were only partially current before his day.

Confucianism now stands forth as the leading religion of the Empire. Its objects of worship are of three classes—the powers of nature, ancestors, and heroes. Originally recognizing the existence of a Supreme personal Deity, it has degenerated into a pantheistic medley, and renders worship to an impersonal *anima mundi* under the leading forms of visible nature. Besides the concrete universe, separate honors are paid to the sun, moon, and stars, mountains, rivers, and lakes.

Of all their religious observances, the worship of ancestors is that which the Chinese regard as the most sacred. As Æneas obtained the name of "Pious" in honor of his filial devotion, so the Chinese idea of piety rises no higher. The Emperor, according to the Confucian school, may worship the Spirit of the Universe, but for his subjects it is sufficient that each present offerings to the spirits of his own ancestors. These rites are performed either at the family tombs or in the family temple, where wooden tablets, inscribed with their names, are preserved as sacred to the memory of the deceased, and

worshipped precisely in the same manner as are the popular ido's.

The class of deified heroes comprehends illustrious sages, eminent sovereigns, faithful statesmen, valiant warriors, filial sons, and public benefactors—Confucius himself occupying the first place, and constituting, as the Chinese say, “one of a trinity with Heaven and Earth.”

Like Confucianism, Taoism is indigenuous to China, and, coeval with the former in its origin, it was also coheir to the mixed inheritance of good and evil contained in the more ancient creeds. The Taoists derive their name from *tao*, reason, and call themselves Rationalists; but, with a marvelous show of profundity, nothing can be more irrational than their doctrine and practice. Their founder, Li Erh, appears to have possessed a great mind, and to have caught glimpses of several sublime truths; but he has been sadly misrepresented by his degenerate followers. He lived in the sixth century B. C., and was contemporary with, but older than, Confucius. So great was the fame of his wisdom that the latter philosopher sought his instructions; but, differing from him in mental mould as widely as Aristotle did from Plato, he could not relish the boldness of his speculations or the vague obscurity of his style. He never repeated his visit, though he always spoke of him with respect and even with admiration.

Laotze, the “old Master,” is the appellation by which the great Taoist is commonly known, and it was probably given him during his lifetime to distinguish him from his younger rival. The rendering of “old child” is no more to be received than the fiction of eighty years’ gestation invented to account for it.

Laotze bequeathed his doctrines to posterity in “five thousand words,” which compose the *Tao Tê Ching*, the

Rule of Reason and Virtue. In expression, this work is extremely sententious; and in the form of its composition, semi-poetical. It abounds in acute apothegms, and some of its passages rise to the character of sublimity; but so incoherent are its contents that it is impossible for any literal interpretation to form them into a system. Its inconsistencies, however, readily yield to that universal solvent—the hypothesis of a mystical meaning underlying the letter of the text. The following passage appears to embody some obscure but lofty conceptions of the True God:

“That which is invisible is called *yi*.
 That which is inaudible is called *hsi*.
 That which is impalpable is called *wei*.
 These three are inscrutable, and blended in one.
 The first is not the brighter; nor the last the darker.
 It is interminable, ineffable, and existed when there
 was nothing.
 A shape without shape, a form without form.
 A confounding mystery!
 Go back, you cannot discover its beginning.
 Go forward, you cannot find its end.
 Take the ancient Reason to govern the present,
 And you will know the origin of old.
 This is the first principle of *Tao*.”

Some European scholars discover here a notion of the Trinity, and, combining the syllables *yi*, *hsi*, and *wei*—for which process, however, they are unable to assign any very good reason—they obtain *yihsiwai*, which they accept as a distorted representation of the name Jehovah. Laotze is said to have travelled in countries to the west of China, where it is supposed he may have met with Jews, and learned from them the name and nature of the Supreme Being. It is an interesting fact that native

commentators, though knowing nothing of these conjectures, recognize in the passage a description of Shang Ti, the God of the Chinese patriarchs; and the three syllables of which the acrostic is composed are admitted to have no assignable meaning in the Chinese language.

Here we find a connection between the degenerate philosophy of after-ages and the pure fountain of primeval truth. In fact, this very Shang Ti, though they have debased the name by bestowing it on a whole class of their *dii superiores*, is still enthroned on the summit of the Taoist Olympus, with ascriptions more expressive of his absolute divinity than any to be met with in the canonical books of the Confucian school. At the head of their Theogony stands the triad of the *San Ching*, the "Three Pure" ones; the first of whom is styled "The mysterious sovereign who has no superior;" "The self-existent source and beginning;" "The honored one of Heaven."

He is said to have created the "three worlds;" to have produced men and gods; to have set the stars in motion, and caused the planets to revolve. But, alas! this catalogue of sublime titles and divine attributes is the epitaph of a buried faith. The Taoists persuaded themselves that this August Being, wrapped in the solitude of his own perfections, had delegated the government of the universe to a subordinate, whom they style Yü Huang Shang Ti. The former has dwindled into an inoperative idea, the latter is recognized as the actual God; and this deity, who plays mayor of the palace to a *roi fainéant*, is regarded as the apotheosis of a mortal by the name of Chang, an ancestor of the present hierarch of the Taoist religion. It is not unusual, after discoursing to them of the attributes of the True God, to hear the people exclaim, "That is our Yü Huang Shang Ti."

In its philosophy, this school is radically and thoroughly materialistic. The soul itself they regard as a material substance, though of a more refined quality than the body it inhabits. Liable to dissolution, together with the body, it may be rendered capable of surviving the wreck by undergoing a previous discipline. Even the body is capable of becoming invulnerable by the stroke of death, so that the etherealized form will, instead of being laid in the grave, be wafted away to the abodes of the genii. It is scarcely possible to represent the extent to which this idea fired the minds of the Chinese for ages after its promulgation, or to estimate the magnitude of its consequences. The prospect of a corporeal immortality to be conquered by a laborious discipline; an immortality which was not the heritage of the many, but might become the prize of a few, had for them attractions far stronger than a shadowy existence in the land of spirits; and they sought it with an eagerness amounting to frenzy. The elixir of life became a grand object of pursuit—witness these lines which I render from a well-known Chinese poem, which illustrates at once its spirit and method:—

“A prince the draught immortal went to seek
And finding it, he soared above the spheres.
In mountain caverns he had dwelt a week,
Of human time, it was a thousand years.”

Alchemy, with its foolish failures and grand achievements, sprang directly from the religion of Tao.*

The leading principle of Taoism, of which their dogma concerning the human soul is only a particular application, is that every species of matter possesses a soul—a subtle essence that may become endowed with in-

* See chapter on Alchemy in this volume.

dividual conscious life. Freed from their grosser elements, these become the genii that preside over the various departments of nature. Some wander at will through the realms of space, endowed with a protean facility of transformation; others, more pure and ethereal, rise to the regions of the stars, and take their places in the firmament. Thus the five principal planets are called by the names of the five terrestrial elements from which they are believed to have originated, and over which they are regarded as presiding. They are not worlds, but divinities, and their motions control the destinies of men and things—a notion which has done much to inspire the zeal of the Chinese for recording the phenomena of the heavens.

A theogony like this is rich in the elements of poetry; and most of the machinery in Chinese works of imagination is, in fact, derived from this source. The *Liao Chai*, for example, a collection of marvelous tales which, in their general character, may be compared with the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, is largely founded on the Taoist mythology.

In accordance with the materialistic character of the Taoist sect, nearly all the gods whom the Chinese regard as presiding over their material interests originated with this school. The god of rain, the god of fire, the god of medicine, the god of agriculture, and the *lares*, or kitchen gods, are among the principal of this class.

A system which supplies deities answering to the leading wants and desires of mankind cannot be uninfluential; but, in addition to the strong motives that attract worshippers to their temples, the Taoist priesthood possess two independent sources of influence. They hold the monopoly of geomancy, a superstitious art which professes to select on scientific principles those localities that

are most propitious for building and burial; and they have succeeded in persuading the people that they alone are able to secure them from annoyance by evil spirits. The philosophy of Tao has thus not only given birth to a religion, but degenerated into a system of magical imposture, presided over by an arch-magician who lives in almost imperial state,* and sways the sceptre over the spirits of the invisible world as the Emperor does over the living population of the Empire.

As a religion, Buddhism seems to enjoy more of the popular favor than Taoism; though the former professes to draw men away from the world and its vanities, while the latter proffers the blessings of health, wealth, and long life.

It is rare that we find a Buddhist temple of any considerable reputation that is not situated in a locality distinguished for some feature of its natural scenery. One situated in the midst of a dusty plain, not far from the gates of Tientsin, seemed to us, when we first visited it, to present an exception to the general rule. Subsequently, however, a brilliant mirage, which we frequently saw as we approached the temple, furnished us at once with the explanation of its location and its name. It is called the temple of the "Sea of Light;" and its founders, no doubt, placed it there in order that the deceptive mirage, which is always visible in bright sunny weather, might serve its contemplative inmates as a memento of the chief tenet of their philosophy—that all things are unreal, and human life itself a shifting phantasmagoria of empty shadows.

Sequestered valleys enclosed by mountain-peaks, and elevated far above the world which they profess to de-

* This is not quite true of the present High-priest, who is so reduced in circumstances that he sometimes leaves his residence in the Lung Hu mountains to raise money in wealthier regions.

spise, are favorite seats for the monastic communities of Buddhism. But it is no yearning after God that leads them to court retirement; nor is it the adoration of nature's Author that prompts them to place their shrines in the midst of His sublimest works. To them the universe is a vacuum, and emptiness the highest object of contemplation.

They are a strange paradox—religious atheists! Acknowledging no First Cause or Conscious Ruling Power, they hold that the human soul revolves perpetually in the urn of fate, liable to endless ills, and enjoying no real good. As it cannot cease to be, its only resource against this state of interminable misery is the extinction of consciousness—a remedy which lies within itself, and which they endeavour to attain by ascetic exercises.

Their daily prayers consist of endless repetitions, which are not expected to be heard by the unconscious deity to whom they are addressed, but are confessedly designed merely to exert a reflex influence on the worshipper—i. e., to occupy the mind with empty sounds and withdraw it from thought and feeling. Ta Ma, one of their saints, is said thus to have sat motionless for nine years with his face to the wall; not engaged, as a German would conjecture, in “thinking the wall,” but occupied with the more difficult task of thinking nothing at all.

Those in whom the discipline is complete are believed to have entered the Nirvana—not an Elysium of conscious enjoyment, but a negative state of exemption from pain. Such is the condition of all the Buddhas, who, though the name is taken to signify supreme intelligence, are reduced to an empty abstraction in a state which is described as *pu sheng pu mieh* “neither life nor death;” and such is the aspiration of all their votaries. Melancholy spectacle! Men of acute minds, bewildered in the

maze of their own speculations, and seeking to attain perfection by stripping themselves of the highest attributes of humanity!

As a philosophy, Buddhism resembles Stoicism in deriving its leading motive from the fear of evil. But while the latter encased itself in panoply, and, standing in martial attitude, defied the world to spoil the treasures laid up in its bosom, the former seeks security by emptying the soul of its susceptibilities and leaving nothing that is capable of being harmed or lost—i. e., treating the soul as Epictetus is said to have done his dwelling-house, in order that he might not be annoyed by the visits of thieves. It dries up the sources of life, wraps the soul in the cerements of the grave, and aims to convert a living being into a spiritual mummy which shall survive all changes without being affected by them.

This is the spirit and these the principles of esoteric Buddhism as enunciated by those members of the inner circle whose wan cheeks and sunken, rayless eyes indicate that they are far advanced in the process of self-annihilation. In their external manifestations they vary with different schools and countries, the lamas of Tartary and the sarmanas of Ceylon appearing to have little in common.

To adapt itself to the comprehension of the masses, Buddhism has personified its abstract conceptions and converted them into divinities; while, to pave the way for its easier introduction, it readily embraces the gods and heroes of each country in its comprehensive pantheon.

In China the Nirvana was found to be too subtle an idea for popular contemplation, and, in order to furnish the people with a more attractive object of worship than an unconscious deity, the Buddhists brought forward a Goddess of Mercy, whose special merit was that, having

reached the verge of Nirvana, she declined to enter, preferring to remain where she could hear the cries and succor the calamities of those who were struggling with the manifold evils of a world of change. From this circumstance she is called the Ts'e Pei Kuan Yin, the " Merciful Hearer of Prayers " of men.

This winning attribute meets a want of humanity, and makes her a favorite among the votaries of the faith. While the Three Buddhas hold a more prominent position in the temple, she occupies the first place in the hearts of their worshippers. Temples of a secondary class are often devoted especially to her; and in the greater ones she almost always finds a shrine or corner where she is represented with a thousand hands ready to succor human suffering, or holding in her arms a beautiful infant, ready to confer the blessing of offspring on her faithful worshippers—in this last attribute resembling the favorite object of popular worship in papal countries. From which, indeed, there is reason to believe she was derived.

In the Sea-light Monastery above referred to, she appears in a large side hall, habited in a cloak, her head encircled by an inscription in gilded characters which proclaims her as the " Goddess whose favor protects the *second birth*." This language seems to express a Christian thought; but in reality nothing could be more intensely pagan. It relates to the transmigration of souls, which is the fundamental doctrine of the system; and informs the visitor that this is the divinity to whom he is to look for protection in passing through the successive changes of his future existence.

Within the mazes of that mighty labyrinth, there is room for every condition of life on earth, and for purgatories and paradises innumerable besides. Beyond these

the common Buddhist never looks. To earn by works of merit—which play an important part in the modified system—the reversion of a comfortable mandarinate, or a place in the “Paradise of the Western Sky,” bounds his aspirations. And to escape from having their souls pounded in a spiritual mortar, or ground between spiritual millstones in Hades; or avoid the doom of dwelling in the body of a brute on earth, constitutes with the ignorant the strongest motive to deter them from vice—those and a thousand other penalties being set forth by pictures and rude casts to impress the minds of such as are unable to read.

Buddhism was little known in China prior to A. D., 66. During an eclipse of Confucianism that lasted two centuries—caused by its proscription, on political grounds, the Emperor Ming Ti sent an embassy to invite priests from India, and the triad of religions was completed. He is said to have been prompted to this by a remarkable dream. He had seen, he said to his courtiers, a man of gold, holding in his hand a bow and two arrows. They, recognizing in these objects the elements of Fo—the name of Buddha as it is written in the Chinese language—expounded the dream as an intimation that the Buddhist religion ought to be introduced. The story of the dream is evidently of later growth, but it is interesting to speculate as to what the condition of China might have been if the ambassadors, instead of stopping in India, had proceeded to Palestine. As it is, the success of Buddhism demonstrates the possibility of a foreign faith taking root in the soil of China.

The *San Chiao*, or Three Religions, have now passed in revision. We have viewed them, however, owing to the limits of our space, only in outline, neither allowing our-

selves, on the one hand, to follow up those superstitious practices which attach themselves to the several schools like the moss and ivy that festoon the boughs of aged trees, nor, on the other, to enter into a minute investigation of those systems of philosophy in which they have their root. The fact that each takes its rise in a school of philosophy is significant of the tendencies of human thought.

The Confucian philosophy in its prominent characteristics was ethical, occupying itself mainly with social relations and civil duties, shunning studiously all questions that enter into ontological subtleties or partake of the marvelous and the supernatural.

The philosophy of Tao as developed by the followers of Laotze, if not in the form in which it was left by their master, may be characterized as physical. For the individual it prescribed a physical discipline; and, without any conception of true science, it was filled with the idea of inexhaustible resources, hidden in the elements of material nature.

The Buddhist philosophy was pre-eminently metaphysical. Originating with a people who, far more than the Chinese, are addicted to abstruse speculations, it occupied itself with subtle inquiries into the nature and faculties of the human mind, the veracity of its perceptions, and the grounds of our delusive faith in the independent existence of an external world.

These three philosophies, differing thus widely in their essential character—one being thoroughly material, another purely ideal, and the third repudiating all such questions and holding itself neutral and indifferent—yet exhibit some remarkable points of agreement. They agree in the original omission or negation of religious

ideas; and they coincide no less remarkably in evolving each, from its negative basis, a system of religion; and in contributing each its quota to the popular idolatry.

Confucius "seldom spoke of the divinities," and taught his disciples to "keep them at a distance;" and yet the forms of respect which he enjoined for deceased ancestors led to their virtual deification, and promoted, if it did not originate, the national hero-worship. Like Comte the modern apostle of positivism, who professed to occupy himself wholly with positive ideas, he was unable to satisfy the cravings of his spiritual nature without having recourse to a religion of humanity.

The Buddhist creed denies alike the reality of the material world and the existence of an overruling mind; yet it has peopled an ideal universe with a race of ideal gods, all of whom are entities in the belief of the vulgar.

The Taoist creed acknowledges no such category as that of spirit in contradistinction from matter; yet it swarms heaven and earth with tutelar spirits whom the people regard as divine.

We see here a process directly the reverse of that which certain writers of modern Europe assert to be the natural progress of the human mind. According to them, men set out with the belief of many gods, whom they at length reduce to unity, and finally supersede by recognizing the laws of nature as independent of a personal administrator. The worship of one God is the oldest recorded form of Chinese religion, and idolatry is an innovation. Even now new idols are constantly taking their place in the national pantheon; and so strong is the tendency in this direction that in every case where philosophy has laid the foundation, idolatry has come in to complete the structure.

It is incorrect to assert that any one of the *San Chiao* is a State religion to the exclusion of the others, though

the Confucian is sometimes so regarded on account of its greater influence with the ruling classes and its marked prominence in connection with State ceremonials. Not only are they all recognized and tolerated, but they all share the Imperial patronage. The shrines of each of the Three Religions are often erected by Imperial munificence, and their priests and sacred rites provided for at the Imperial expense with impartial liberality.

Not only do they co-exist without conflict in the Empire, but they exercise a joint sway over almost every mind in its immense population. It is impossible to apportion the people among these several creeds. They are all Confucians, all Buddhists, all Taoists. They all reverence Confucius and worship their ancestors—all participate in the "feast of hungry ghosts," and employ the Buddhist burial-service; and all resort to the magical devices of the Taoists to protect themselves against the assaults of evil spirits, or secure "good luck" in business. They celebrate their marriages according to the Confucian rites; in building their houses, they ask the advice of a Taoist; and in cases of alarming illness employ him to exorcise evil spirits. At death they commit their souls to the keeping of the Buddhists. The people assert, and with truth, that these religions, originally three, have become one; and they are accustomed to symbolize this unity by erecting *San Chiao T'ang*, Temples of the Three Religions, in which Confucius and Laotze appear on the right and left of Buddha, as forming a triad of sages. This arrangement, however, gives great offense to some of the more zealous disciples of Confucius; and a few years ago a memorial was presented to the Emperor, praying him to demolish the *San Chiao T'ang*, which stood near the tomb of their great teacher, who has "no equal but Heaven."

The effects of this coalition may be traced in their literature as well as in the manners and customs of the people. Of this, one example will suffice, though we might go on, if space permitted, to show how freely the later works of each school appropriate the phraseology of the others, and to point out the extent to which the general language of the country has been enriched by a vocabulary of religious terms, chiefly of Buddhist origin, all of which are incorporated in the Imperial Dictionary and pass as current coin in the halls of the literary tribunal.

In the *Liao Chai*, a collection of tales, there is a story which owes its humor to the bizarre intermixture of elements from each of the Three Religions.

A young nobleman, riding out, hawk in hand, is thrown from his horse and taken up for dead. On being conveyed to his house, he opens his eyes and gradually recovers his bodily strength; but, to the grief of his family, he is hopelessly insane. He fancies himself a Buddhist priest, repels the caresses of the ladies of his harem, and insists on being conveyed to a distant province, where he affirms he has passed his life in a monastery. On arriving he proves himself to be the abbot; and the mystery of his transfiguration is at once solved.

He had led a dissolute life, and his flimsy soul, unable to sustain the shock of death, was at once dissipated. The soul of a priest who had just expired happened to be floating by, and, led by that desire to inhabit a body which some say impelled the devils to enter the herd of swine, it took possession of the still warm corpse.

The young nobleman was a Confucian of the modern type. The idea of the soul changing its earthly tenement is Buddhistic. And that which rendered the metamorphosis possible, without waiting for another birth, was the Taoist doctrine that the soul is dissolved with the

body, unless it be purified and concentrated by vigorous discipline.

It is curious to inquire on what principles this reconciliation has been effected. Have the three creeds mingled together like the three gases in the atmosphere, each contributing some ingredient to the composition of a vital fluid; or blended like the three primary colors of the spectrum, imparting their own hues in varying proportions; but all present at every point? It is not a healthy atmosphere that supplies the breath of the new-born soul in China; not a pure and steady light that meets its opening eyes. Yet each of these systems meets a want; and the whole, taken together, supplies the cravings of nature as well perhaps as any creed not derived from a divine revelation.

The Three Religions are not, as the natives thoughtlessly assume, identical in signification and differing only in their mode of expression. As we have already seen, it is hardly possible to conceive of three creeds more totally distinct or radically antagonistic; and yet, to a certain extent, they are supplementary. And to this it is that they owe their union and their permanence.

Confucius gave his people an elaborate theory of their social organization and civil polity; but when they looked abroad on nature with its unsolved problems, they were unable to confine their thoughts within the limits of his cautious positivism. They were fascinated by mystery, and felt that in nature there were elements of the supernatural which they could not ignore, even if they did not understand them. Hence the rise of Taoism, captivating the imagination by its hierarchy of spirits and personified powers, and meeting, in some degree, the longing for a future life by maintaining, though under hard conditions, the possible achievement of a corporeal immortality.

With the momentous question of existence suspended on this bare possibility, Buddhism came to them like an evangel of hope, assuring every man of an inalienable interest in a life to come. It gave them a better psychology of the human mind than they had before possessed; afforded a plausible explanation of the inequalities in the condition of men; and, by the theory of metempsychosis, seemed to reveal the link that connects man with the lower animals, on the one hand, and with the gods, on the other. No wonder it excited the popular mind to a pitch of enthusiasm, and provoked the adherents of the other creeds to virulent opposition.

Taoism, as opposed to it, became more decidedly material, and Confucianism more positively atheistic. The disciples of the latter especially assailed it with acrimonious controversy—denying, though they had hitherto been silent on such questions, the personality of God and the future life of the human soul.

Now, however, the effervescence of passion has died away—the antagonistic elements have long since neutralized each other, and the three creeds have subsided into a stable equilibrium, or rather become compacted into a firm conglomerate. The ethical, the physical, and the metaphysical live together in harmony. The school that denies the existence of matter, that which occupies itself wholly with the properties of matter, and that, again, which denounces the subtleties of both and builds on ethics, have ceased their controversies. One deriving its motive from the fear of death, another actuated by a dread of the evils attendant on human life, and the third absorbed in the present and indifferent alike to hope or fear, all are accepted with equal faith by an unreasoning populace. Without perceiving their points of discrepancy, or understanding the manner in which they supplement each other,

they accept each as answering to certain cravings of their inward nature, and blend them all in a huge heterogeneous and incongruous creed. It may help to reconcile apparently contradictory statements to remember that each of the three systems appears under a twofold aspect—first as an esoteric philosophy, afterwards as a popular religion. Thus a chief object of the Buddhist discipline was the extinction of consciousness. Yet the Chinese embraced it as their best assurance of a future life. What the philosopher was anxious to cast away, the populace were eager to possess.

It would be interesting to inquire, had we sufficient space, what have been the intellectual and moral influences of these several systems, separate and combined. They have, it is true, given rise to various forms of degrading superstition, and, supporting instead of destroying each other, they bind the mind of the nation in three-fold fetters; still, we are inclined to think that each has served a useful purpose in the long education of the Chinese people, and that each represents a distinct stage in the progress of religious thought. Buddhism vastly enlarged their religious conceptions. Their ideas, to borrow a mathematical illustration, were limited, prior to the introduction of Buddhism, to two dimensions,—to something that may be described as a “flat-land,” with length and breadth, but no height. Buddhism gave it height, soaring up to the heavens and developing a view of the universe, the grandeur of which, perhaps, nothing can exceed. Is it possible that, after this universe of three dimensions, we shall have one of four dimensions? There is, in my view, room for the fourth dimension, or (to drop the figure) there is room for a fourth stage in the progression,—one which China is waiting for. Christianity alone can supply the defects of all the systems, and

present one harmonious unity. They are now offered a better faith—one which is consistent with itself and adequate to satisfy all their spiritual necessities. Will they receive it? The habit of receiving such contradictory systems has rendered their minds almost incapable of weighing evidence; and they never ask concerning a religion “is it true?” but “is it good?” Christianity, however, with its exclusive and peremptory claims, has already begun to arouse their attention; and when the spirit of inquiry is once thoroughly awakened, the *San Chiao*, or Three Creeds, will not long sustain the ordeal.

NOTE I

THE EMPEROR AT THE ALTAR OF HEAVEN

THE Roman Emperors always associated with their other titles that of Pontifex Maximus; and the Sovereigns of China have from time immemorial acted as High Priests of the empire.

It was in that capacity that His Majesty Kuang Hsü officiated at the Temple of Heaven on the 22nd December, 1887, for the first time, on the occasion of the solstitial sacrifices. On the previous day, he proceeded to the Temple with great pomp, accompanied by the grandees of the Court, three elephants harnessed to as many chariots appearing in the procession. Having prepared himself by a night spent in fasting and meditation to approach the presence of the King of Kings, he prostrated himself nine times before a tablet inscribed with the name of Shang Ti, and offered an ox, the bones of the victim being consumed in a furnace.

As to the herd of common gods, the Emperor can make

and unmake them at will. He even assumes to decide whether a living Buddha shall or shall not have the privilege of re-appearing in another body; but in the presence of Shang Ti, the master of China's millions abases himself in the dust, and confesses himself a subject of law.

When the Taiping rebellion was at its height in 1853, the Emperor Hsien Fêng repaired to the Altar of Heaven, confessed his sins, and implored on behalf of his suffering people the compassion of the Sovereign of the Universe. By this act, he acknowledged that he ruled by delegated authority, and that he was answerable for its proper use.

The same idea is impressively set forth by a row of iron censers, ranged around the foot of the altar. In these, it is not strips of mimic gold that are consumed, nor sticks of incense, but long lists of the names of criminals condemned to death, the smoke and flame rising up to Heaven, appealing for ratification or redress to the Supreme Court of the Universe.

The Emperor is a monotheist, because there is only one God sufficiently exalted to be to him an object of worship in the highest sense; for, though he does worship at the shrines of other divinities, to none but Shang Ti does he employ the humble style of a servant, and he, if not the only worshipper of Shang Ti, is the only one who is permitted to make use of the prescribed ritual. For any one else to presume to imitate that ritual would be an act of high treason, as it could have but one meaning,—that of an intention to usurp the prerogatives and to seize the throne of the sovereign. The only instance of this which we have on record—except in cases of overt rebellion—is that of the Prince of Ch'in erecting an altar to Shang Ti, some 2,500 years ago. The act betokened a disposition on his part to seize the falling crown of the Chous,—which one of his descendants actually accomplished. The

Chou Emperor in the meantime tolerated the abuse, because he lacked the power to punish so great a vassal.

The antiquity of this Imperial rite is not the least interesting of its features. It goes back to the first of the Three Dynasties, to a date when Melchisedek combined with his kingly office that of "Priest of the Most High God." In that day, there was no Buddhism, no Taoism; but, whether that primitive worship connects itself with a purer form of partriarchal faith, or whether, as Emerson expresses it—

"Up from the heart of nature came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame"—

I shall not undertake to determine.

The idea of the offerings on this occasion is that of a banquet, in which the spirit of the Supreme condescends to accept entertainment at the hand of a mortal. He is accompanied by eight imperial guests,—the ancestors of the officiating sovereign,—who, like Wên Wang in the *Book of Odes*, are regarded as favored guests in the Court of Heaven.

The august pageant is withheld from eyes profane; and of course all foreigners in Peking are officially invited to be absent.

I do not, accordingly, profess to give you the observations of an eye-witness; though I have perhaps as good a right to do so as certain war correspondents have had, to depict a battle-scene, when they have viewed the smoke at a distance. I have seen the altar; and I have at this moment the ritual of the day before my eyes. But it would not add much to the interest of my readers to have a libretto of the nine pieces of sacred music, or an inventory of the subordinate offerings which accompany the *Fan Niu*, or ox of burnt sacrifice.

NOTE II

THE DUKE OF K'UNG—SUCCESSOR OF CONFUCIUS

THE *Peking Gazette* contains the following obituary announcement, in the usual form of an Imperial decree: "The Duke K'ung Hsiang K'o, lineal successor of the Holy Sage, has departed this life. Let the proper Board report as to the marks of Imperial favor to be accorded in connection with the funeral rites."

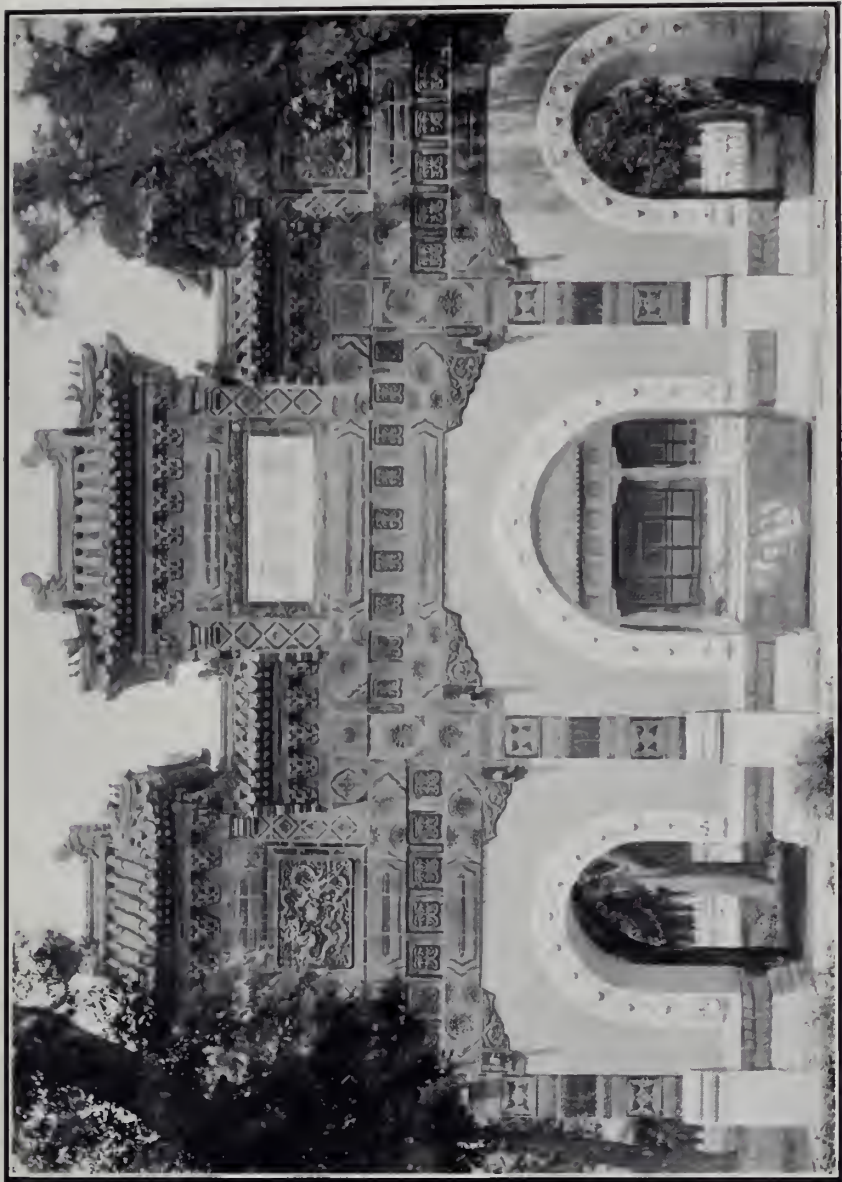
The Duke was about twenty-six years of age, and a descendant of Confucius at a remove of more than seventy generations. The last on the family record published in the last century was the seventy-first. Of his personal character we know nothing, save that he once admitted a company of foreigners, the Rev. Dr. Williamson and others, into his presence, and treated them with great urbanity. What interests us more, and furnishes the sole reason for chronicling his death, whether in these lines or in the still briefer notice in the *Peking Gazette*, is his representative character. K'ung Hsiang K'o was head of the Confucian clan, and as such he enjoyed the dignities and emoluments of a noble of the first class.

Hereditary rank makes so small a figure in the administration of the Chinese government that we sometimes hear it asserted that there is no such thing in China. Now, those who hazard this assertion, not only leave out of view the feudal organization of the Manchu and Mongol races, but forget the sonorous titles prefixed to the names of some of the leading Chinese statesmen of the present day. We can scarcely take up a number of the *Peking Gazette* without being reminded that Li Hung Chang is an earl, of the first grade; and a few years ago

the title of marquis, was made equally prominent in connection with the name of the late eminent Tsêng Kuo Fan and his equally distinguished son. In a word, all the five degrees of hereditary nobility which were in use three thousand years ago are to be found (by searching) among the Chinese of to-day; but with this important difference, that they no longer imply the possession of landed estates or territorial jurisdiction. Leaving the secular peerage of China proper, as well as that of the dominant race, to be treated by some one who has leisure and inclination for the subject, we propose to devote a few paragraphs to what we venture to denominate the sacred heraldry of the Empire.

Many years ago, in the course of an overland journey from Peking to Shanghai, the writer turned aside to visit the tomb of Confucius. It was an impressive spectacle to see the heads of the various branches into which the clan is divided performing their semi-monthly devotions before the tablet of their illustrious ancestor. Many of these discharge official duties, and constitute a kind of priesthood in the temple of the Sage; their appointments, whether hereditary or otherwise, are duly recorded in the Red Book, or official register. The chief of the tribe is known as *Yen Sheng K'ung*, the Duke of the Holy Succession—a succession which is older in generations than most aged men are in the reckoning of years. There are Jewish families who can boast a longer pedigree—running back, perhaps, to the return from captivity, B. C. 536; but where, out of China, shall we look for a family whose nobility has a history of twenty centuries?

The first hereditary distinction was conferred on the senior member of the house of K'ung by the founder of the Han dynasty, B. C. 202. The title was at first the



ARCH AND TEMPLE OF CONFUCIUS

vague designation of *chün*, prince, and coupled with the charge of the ancestral temple. This was exchanged for the more distinguishing title of *hou*, marquis, by order of Wu Ti, of the same dynasty. The later Chou, A. D. 550, substituted the title of *K'ung*, duke; but in the next dynasty, that of Sui, it reverted to marquis, and so continued through the three centuries of the T'angs. At the accession of the Sung, the heir of Confucius was again raised to the dignity of duke—a rank which he has retained without material variation for more than eight centuries.

In the topographical and genealogical histories we are favored with biographical sketches of the individual links in this long chain; but through them all there runs a thread of dreary monotony. In earlier ages, the house of K'ung did indeed produce a few men of exceptional eminence in letters and in politics. They are not, however, always found in the line of primogeniture, and, in the rare instances in which titled heads have distinguished themselves, we have to recognize the stimulating influence of court life, from which they were not yet excluded.

Under the existing *régime*, the succession presents us no name of note; a result more due to want of opportunity than to any deterioration of race, for, according to some observers, the blood of Confucius continues to assert itself in the superior development of his posterity. But what are we to expect when a family is rooted to the soil of a cemetery but that it should become as barren as the cypress that overhangs it?

The Dukes of K'ung are strictly relegated to the vicinity of their sacerdotal charge, and are not at liberty to visit the capital without express permission from the throne.

We recall the late Duke's application for leave to pros-

trate himself before the sarcophagus of the Emperor Tung Chih, certainly the last and probably the only occasion on which he ever entered the walls of Peking.

The family estate, it must be confessed, is large enough to gratify the ambition and employ the energies of an ordinary mortal, amounting (for it is not all in one place) to an area of not less than 165,000 acres.

And as for honors, the country nobleman has much to console him for the privations of provincial life; the Governor of the province, it is said, being required to approach him with the same forms of homage which he renders to the Son of Heaven. Numerous offices of inferior dignity are conferred on other members of the clan, constituting it a kind of Levitical order; but it is pleasing to remark that these tokens of a nation's undying gratitude are not limited to the lineage of Confucius. Around the grand luminary there moved a cluster of satellites, which drank in his beams and propagated his light.

The chief of these Yen, Tsêng, Sze, Mêng, as the Chinese concisely call them, and a few others, continued to be honored in the same way, though not to the same degree, as the Sage himself. Inseparable attendants of the Sage, in all his temples, at least one of which exists in every district of the Empire, each of them enjoys the honor of a separate shrine, and some of his posterity derive their subsistence from the charge of it. In the city of Chü Fu, a conspicuous inscription points out the spot where Yen Hui, in the midst of poverty, presented a face ever radiant with joy, because his soul was filled with divine philosophy. Hard by stands a magnificent mausoleum to the man who never wrote a book and never performed any great exploit; but who embodied in his own practice more perfectly than any other the precepts

of his Master. In the adjoining district of Tsou Hsien stands a temple to Mencius, the St. Paul of Confucianism, who, though he entered the world too late to enjoy the personal teachings of the Great Sage, did more than any other to give them shape and currency. Not far away, in the same city, stands a somewhat dilapidated temple of T'ze Sze, the master of Mencius, and the grandson of Confucius. Though in the direct line, the Chinese have not been willing to merge his name and fame in those of his ancestor; but have taken effectual measures for testifying to all generations their reverence for the author of the *Chung Yung*, or "Golden Mean."

The whole region surrounding the temple of Confucius is dotted over by the tombs of ancient worthies; and it is touching to see with what sacred care their descendants cherish the fire on their altars. Under various designations they have discharged these offices for more than seventy, and in one instance for nearly a hundred, generations; but their present titles date from the Ming dynasty. The founder of the Mings, an unlettered warrior, who never read the Four Books until he was seated on the throne and had Liu Chi for a teacher, conferred certain honors on the descendants of Yen Hui and Mencius. His successors ordered that representatives of fifteen of the disciples of Confucius should be enrolled in the Hanlin College, and invested with the office of professors and curators of the Five Classics.

Nor is it only the Great Sage and his disciples who enjoy the distinction of a memorial temple, a State ritual, and an hereditary priesthood; all these are accorded to the Duke of Chou, whom Confucius revered as a master and imitated as a model. Chou Kung died more than five hundred years before the birth of Confucius; but the later Sage not only professed to have caught his inspira-

tion from the earlier, but in one of his most touching speeches he gave it as a mark of decaying nature that he had "ceased to dream of Chou Kung."

It is not surprising, therefore, that the family of the virtuous Regent of China's typical dynasty should have some small part in the cloud of incense which China offers to the pioneers of her civilization. Their claim to it was eloquently advocated by one of his descendants when the Emperor Kang Hsi visited the "sacred soil of Lu," and promptly recognized by that enlightened monarch. None of these venerated shades is regarded as exercising a tutelar guardianship over the Empire, or over any part of it. Their temples, though vulgar superstitions have gathered round them, are essentially memorial, and the worship wholly commemorative. It is thus that China has sought to mould her children into one family and to secure the stability of society by binding it to the traditions of the past.

The representatives of these families, as we have said, are a priesthood rather than a nobility; but so closely are the two ideas associated in the Chinese mind that a writer of these family histories finds in ancestral worship the origin of feudal dignities. His philosophy is at fault; but it is gratifying to observe that, while the feudal lords of China have gone under in the struggle for existence, the only vestiges of the *ancient nobility* (the secular are all new) are those which cluster round the memories of the wise and good.

XII

THE ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHINESE

WIDELY as the Chinese have departed from the meagre outline of a religious system left them by Confucius, they have generally adhered to his moral teachings. Developed by his followers, received by the suffrages of the whole people, and enforced by the sanctions of the Three Religions, the principles which he inculcated may be said to have moulded the social life of nearly one-third of the human family. These are nowhere to be found digested into a scientific form, but diffused through the mingled masses of physics and metaphysics which compose the *Hsing Li Ta Chüan*, Encyclopædia of Philosophy, or sparkling in the detached apothegms of "The Sages." Happily for our convenience we have them brought to a focus in the chart, a translation of which is given below.

We shall confine ourselves to the task of explaining this important document, as the best method of exhibiting the system in its practical influence; though an independent view might afford freer scope for discussing its principles.

This chart is anonymous; but the want of a name detracts nothing from its value. The author has no merit beyond the idea of presenting the subject in a tabular view, and the pictorial taste with which he has executed the design. Of the ethical system so exhibited he originated nothing; and the popularity of his work is due

mainly to the fact that it is regarded as a faithful synopsis of the Confucian morals.

The half-illuminated sphere prefixed to the chart is a mere embellishment having scarcely more connection with its subject-matter than the royal coat-of-arms stamped on the title-page of some editions has with the contents of King James's Bible. It represents the mundane egg, or mass of chaotic matter, containing *Yin* and *Yang*, the seminal principles from whose action and reaction all things were evolved.

Part I. is an epitome of the *Ta Hsüeh*, the first of the four chief canonical books of the Chinese, and the most admired production of their great philosopher.

Voluminous as an editor, piously embalming the relics of antiquity, Confucius occupies but a small space as an author; a slender compend of history and this little tract of a few hundred words being the only original works which emanated from his own pen. The latter, the title of which signifies the "Great Study," is prized so highly for the elegance of its style and the depth of its wisdom that it may often be seen inscribed in letters of gold, and suspended as an ornamental tableau in the mansions of the rich. It treats of the Practice of Virtue and the Art of Government; and in the following table these two subjects are arranged in parallel columns. In the first we have the lineaments of a perfect character superscribed by the word *Sheng*, a "Holy Sage," the name which the Chinese give to their ideal. In the other we have a catalogue of the social virtues as they spread in widening circles through the family, the neighborhood, the State, and the world. These are ranged under *Wang*, the "Emperor," whose duty it is to cherish them in his subjects, the force of example being his chief instrument, and the cultivation of personal virtue his first obligation. The

A CHART OF CHINESE ETHICS.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I.—CHART OF THE GREAT STUDY.

This contains the True Tradition of the Holy Sages. Whoever obtains this doctrine may live in prosperity and die in peace. I have accordingly condensed it into a chart, to be hung on the right of your easy chair, to aid your study of virtue, just as the ancients made use of inscriptions on their girdles and wash-basins.



Heaven having given existence to man, the doctrine of Restricted in its sphere, it produces the perfection of individual excellence—a Holy Sage

His aim is,

PERSONAL VIRTUE.

The means to its attainment are—

From the Son of Heaven down to the private man, every one must begin with the Cultivation of Personal Virtue.

1. Propriety of Conduct. { Fidelity and Truth. Suavity and Respect. Dignity of Carriage. Precision of Words and Actions.

2. Right Feeling.

{ Avoiding Prejudice. Restraining the Passions. Cherishing Good Impulses. Adhering to the Just Mean.

3. Sincerity of Purpose.

{ Self-examination. Scrutiny of Secret Motives. Religious Reverence. Fear of Self-deception.

4. Intelligence of Mind.

{ Rejection of Error. Comprehension of the Truth. Quickness of Moral Perception. Insight into Providence. Study of the Laws of Nature. Study of the Constitution of Man. Study of the Records of History.

The Great Study stops only at Perfection.

the Great Study succeeded, and established order in society. With free scope for its exercise, it makes a Reformer of the World—a True King.

His aim is,

SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT.

The means to its attainment are—

{ Filial Piety. Fraternal Love. Conjugal Fidelity. Care in Choice of Associates. [es. Strictness in Intercourse of the Sex. Attention to Children. Instruction against Partiality. Caution against Partiality. Harmony with Neighbors. Regard for Frugality. Science of Government. Power of Combination. [tors. Reverence for Heaven and Ancestors. Discrimination in Choice of Agents. Love for the People. Zeal for Education. Strictness in Executing the Laws. Wisdom in Conducting War. Righteousness in Rewards and Punishments. [sion of Sentiment. Liberality in Admitting the Express. Frugality in Expenditures. Skill in Legislation.

PART II.—A CHART OF THE HEART.—The Chart of the Great Study will acquaint you with the principles of virtue; but as the keeping of the heart is a matter of great difficulty, I accordingly subjoin this * chart of it.

The Human Heart is in constant jeopardy (i. e. beset with dangers and prone to evil).



The Wisdom Heart is minute and subtle (i. e. the germ of virtue is small and feeble).

Point of Divergence
between *Shun* and *Chieh*.[†]

Influence of Gross Matter.
The Human Heart.

Influence of Primordial Harmony.
The Wisdom Heart.

1. Obeys Heaven.

(a) In Propriety of Conduct.

By { Regulating the External Actions,
and
Moderating the Internal Passions.

(b) In the Exercise of Charity.

By { Conquering the Malevolent Affections,
and
Governing the Desires and Aversions.

2. Restrains Self.

(a) In Subduing the Lusts.

By { Repressing Self-love,
and
Curbing Animal Appetite.

(b) In Guarding against Evil even when alone.

By { Not Injuring one's Body, Soul, Nature or Life;
Not Forgetting the Reverential Exercise of Self-
control.

He who pursues this course will daily rise in illumination, and finally become a saint or sage. Propitious stars will shine on him, and happiness attend his footsteps.

* *Hsin*, the Chinese word for heart.

1. Indulges Self.

(a) In Habits of Indolence.
Leading to { Gluttony and Drunkenness,
Idleness and Waste of Time.

(b) In Carnal Lusts.

Leading to { Shameless Excesses,
A bominable Immoralities.

(c) In Avarice.

Leading to { Filthy Lucre.
Violent Extortion.

2. Dismisses Conscience.

(a) In Yielding to Impulse.
For { Sensual Pleasure,
Anger, Strife, etc.

(b) In Treachery.

Involving { Flattery and
Deceit.

(c) In Hypocrisy.

Involving { Dissimulation and
Falsehood.

He who follows this course, daily drifts into deeper corruption, and finally becomes a beast or monster. Evil stars glare on him, and calamity overtakes him.

† The best and worst characters mentioned in history.

PART III.—A CHART OF MORAL EXCELLENCE.—The two roads of virtue and vice are clearly treated in the above chart, but as the virtues are not easy to practise, I add a chart of moral excellence.

Momentarily keep it in mind.
BENEVOLENCE.

Public Spirit.—Give all their dues, and let not self set up an opposing interest; but find your own good in the common weal.

Charity.—Do not to others what you would not have done to you.

Remember not old injuries, and treat men according to their several capacity.

Filial Piety.—Gratify the wishes of your parents, and worship your ancestors;

Carry out their purposes, and reflect honor on their [name].

Mercy.—Treat all children with kindness, not your own only.

Pity the widow and fatherless, and give succor to [sentient] brute animals.

Magnanimity.—A great soul can bear an offence without revenge. He mingles with men on easy terms, and affects no superiority.

Kindness must be repaid, but not injury.

Rather suffer a wrong than do one.

WISDOM.

Knowledge of Man.—Detect false pretences; cleave to the virtuous, and avoid the vicious. Let not floating rumors move you to dislike a good man.

Knowledge of Nature.—Be erudite, inquisitive, thoughtful, discriminating; investigating heaven and earth, the past and present.

Knowledge of Fate.—Practise virtue, take care of yourself, do your duty; and let good or ill fortune come as it may.

Use of the Eyes and Ears.—Keep the distant in clear view, and have an open ear for good counsel. Read no immoral books, hearken not to flattering words.

GOOD FAITH.

Simplicity.—In word and deed, in and out, one and the same. In study or action, uniform from beginning to end.

Truth.—The words of the inner chambers should bear repeating in the palace.

Your private life should be such that heaven and earth might witness it.

Sincerity of Purpose.—Complete your engagements.

And be faithful in behalf of others.

Honesty of Intention.—So live that your heart will not condemn you, the people not dislike you, your family not be ashamed of you, or your friends reproach you.

POLITENESS.

Respect.—Proceeding from an inward feeling.

Manifests itself in apparel and demeanor.

Caution.—Treasures the fruits of observation, hides the bad, and publishes the good.

It preserves conjugal harmony, and maintains decorum in the intercourse of the sexes.

Humility.—When rich, feels poor; when full, feels empty.

Makes no boast of abilities, nor prides itself on place or reputation.

Deference.—Declines much and takes little;

And is only solicitous to find a lower place than others.

Tremblingly hold it fast.

JUSTICE.

Manliness.—If you fail in anything, seek help in yourself. Stand to your post, and let not vague desires draw you from it.

Fraternity.—Respect your elder, and be kind to your younger brothers.

Reverence age, and give precedence to years.

Courage.—When you see the right, do it; when you know your fault, correct it.

If rich, be not insolent; nor cringing, if poor.

Integrity.—I told it fast; change not for custom. Be content with simple fare; and when you see gain, ask, is it just?

Modesty.—Let men be continent, women chaste.

Abhor evil, and fear falling.

PART IV.—A CHART FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.—The virtues may be copied from the chart of moral excellence, but lest vices should creep in unawares, I conclude with a formula for self-examination.

If you have faults, correct them.

OFFENCES AGAINST BENEVOLENCE.

Cruelty.—Inflicting misery on family relatives,
And finding pleasure in giving pain to man or beast.
Envy.—Jealous of the advantages of others, obstructing their promotion.
Offended at the superiority of others, indulging in de-
[fraction].
Malice.—Playing wicked pranks, and forgetting favors.
Delighting to hear of others' faults, and taking pleas-
ure in publishing them.
Selfishness.—Consulting its own interest, and
Seeking its own advantage.
Treachery.—Inveigling others into evil, and
Involving them in calamity for its own ends.
Petulance.—With spirit so contracted as not to endure an
accidental touch.

OFFENCES AGAINST WISDOM.

Depravity.—Neither caring for right and wrong,
Nor distinguishing good from evil.
Levity.—Leading to inconsiderate words and actions.
Shallowness.—Prying and meddling some.
Mistaking slight praise or blame for glory or shame.
Interpreting slight favor or opposition as love or hatred.
Obstinacy.—Holding to its own opinions, and refusing to be convinced.
Narrowness.—Content with a humble circle of familiar thoughts, and
Unwilling to extend the view, or enlarge the sphere of knowledge.

OFFENCES AGAINST POLITENESS.

Pride.—Using wealth and power for self-magnification.
Employing talents and learning to eclipse others.
Arrogance.—Immodest in language, disrespectful to the aged.
Perverse in action, and heedless of advice.
Carelessness.—In affairs negligent of details.
In disposition harsh, in manners blunt.
 Ostentation.—In all things tending to excess.
In general aiming to outshine others.

If none, redouble your zeal in the pursuit of virtue.

OFFENCES AGAINST JUSTICE.

Cupidity.—Never satisfied, but always longing.
Indulging the senses, coveting fame and pursuing gain.
Flattery.—With artificial smiles and simulated voice.
Playing the sycophant in hope of power. [deserving].
Partiality.—Neither succoring the needy nor rewarding the
[esteem].
Concealing wealth, and affecting poverty.
Indecision.—Indolently procrastinating, and shifting with
[custom].
Drifting with the current, and bending before power.
Discontent.—Uneasy in its condition, and destitute of self-
satisfaction. [fault with men].
In everything it murmurs against Heaven, and finds
Perversity.—Capricious in choices and aversions, not seeking
the right.
Following inclination, and regarding neither good nor
[evil].

OFFENCES AGAINST GOOD FAITH.

Superficiality.—Without solid virtues, seeking an empty
[ship].
reputation.
Making a fair show, but hasty and insincere in friend-
Insincerity.—With heart and life at variance,
Coveting the name of virtue.
Deceit.—In words false, in actions dishonest.
Intrigue.—Scheming, calculating,
Plotting and shifting.

passage which is here analyzed, and which constitutes the foundation of the whole treatise, is the following:

"Those ancient princes who desired to promote the practice of virtue throughout the world first took care to govern their own states. In order to govern their states, they first regulated their own families. In order to regulate their families, they first practiced virtue in their own persons. In order to the practice of personal virtue, they first cultivated right feeling. In order to insure right feeling, they first had sincerity of purpose. In order to secure sincerity of purpose, they extended their knowledge. Knowledge is enlarged by inquiring into the nature of things."

This converging series is beautiful. However widely the branches may extend, the quality of their fruit is determined by the common root. Virtue in the State depends on virtue in the family, that of the family on that of the individual; and individual virtue depends not only on right feelings and proper motives, but, as a last condition, on right knowledge. Nor is there anything in which Confucius more strikingly exhibits the clearness of his perceptions than in indicating the direction in which this indispensable intelligence is to be sought—viz., in the nature of things; in understanding the relations which the individual sustains to society and the universe. The knowledge of these is truth, conformity to them is virtue; and moral obligations, Confucius appears, with Dr. Samuel Clarke, to have derived from a perception of these relations, and a sense of inherent fitness in the nature of things. Just at this point we have a notable hiatus. The editor tells us the chapter on the "Study of Nature" is wanting; and Chinese scholars have never ceased to deplore its loss.

But whatever of value to the student of virtue it may

have contained, it certainly did not contain the "beginning of wisdom." For skilfully as Confucius had woven the chain of human relationships, he failed to connect the last link with Heaven to point out the highest class of our relations. Not only, therefore, is one grand division of our duties a blank in his system, but it is destitute of that higher light and those stronger motives which are necessary to stimulate to the performance of the most familiar offices.

A young mandarin who once said to me, in answer to a question as to his object in life, that "he was desirous of performing all his duties to God and man," was not speaking in the language of the Confucian school. He had been taught in a mission school and discovered a new world in our moral relations which was unknown to the ancient philosopher.

The principal relations of the individual to society are copiously illustrated in this and the other classics. They are five—the *governmental*, *parental*, *conjugal*, *fraternal*, and that of *friendship*. The first is the comprehensive subject of the treatise; and in the second column of the chart all the others are placed subordinate to it. The last comprehends the principles which regulate general intercourse. Conjugal *fidelity*, in the sense of chastity, is made obligatory only on the female. *Fraternal* duty requires a rigid subordination, according to the gradation of age, which is aided by a peculiarity of language; each elder brother being called *hsiung*, and each younger *ti*; no common designation, like that of "brother," placing them on equal footing. This arrangement in the family Confucius pronounces a discipline, in which respect is taught for superiors in civil life; and filial piety, he adds, is a sentiment which a son who has imbibed it at home will carry into the service of his prince.

Nothing, in fact, is more characteristic of Chinese society than the scope given to filial piety. Intensified into a religious sentiment by the worship which he renders to his ancestors, it leads the dutiful son to live and act in all situations with reference to his parents. He seeks reputation for the sake of reflecting honor upon them, and dreads disgrace chiefly through fear of bringing reproach on their name. An unkindness to a relative is a sin against them, in forgetting the ties of a common ancestry; and even a violation of the law derives its turpitude from exposing the parents of the offender to suffer with him, in person or in reputation. It is thus analogous in the universality of its application to the incentive which the Christian derives from his relation to the "Father of spirits;" and if inferior in its efficacy, it is yet far more efficacious than any which a pagan religion is capable of supplying. Its various bearings are beautifully traced by Confucius in a discourse which constitutes one of the favorite text-books in the schools of China.

It is not the book, but the art of governing thus founded on the practice of virtue, that is emphatically denominated the "Great Study;" and this designation, expressing, as it does, the judgment of one from whose authority there is no appeal, has contributed to give ethics a decided preponderance among the studies of the Chinese. Other sciences, in their estimation, may be interesting as sources of intellectual diversion or useful in a subordinate degree, as promotive of material prosperity; but this is *the science*, whose knowledge is wisdom, whose practice is virtue, whose result is happiness. In the literary examinations, the grand object of which is the selection of men who are qualified for the service of the government, an acquaintance with subjects of this kind contributes more to official promotion than all other intellectual ac-

quirements; and when the aspirant for honors has reached the summit of the scale, and become a member of the Privy Council or Premier of the Empire, he receives no higher appellation than that of *Ta Hsüeh Shih*—a Doctor of the Great Study, an adept in the art of Government.

The Chinese Empire has never realized the Utopia of Confucius; but his maxims have influenced its policy to such an extent that in the arrangements of the government a marked preference is given to moral over material interests. Indeed, it would be hard to overestimate the influence which has been exerted by this little schedule of political ethics, occupying, as it has, so prominent a place in the Chinese mind for four-and-twenty centuries—teaching the people to regard the Empire as a vast family, and the Emperor to rule by moral influence, making the goal of his ambition not the wealth, but the virtue, of his subjects. It is certain that the doctrines which it embodies have been largely efficient in rendering China what she is, the most ancient and the most populous of existing nations.

Part II. is chiefly interesting for the views it presents of the condition of human nature. It is not, as its title would seem to indicate, a map of the moral faculties; but simply a delineation of the two ways which invite the footsteps of every human pilgrim. On the one hand are traced the virtues that conduct to happiness; on the other the vices that lead to misery. Over the former is written *Tao Hsin*, "Wisdom Heart," and over the latter, *Jên Hsin*, "Human Heart," as descriptive of the dispositions from which they respectively proceed.

These terms, with the two sentences of the chart in which they occur, originated in the *Shu King*, one of the oldest of the sacred books, and are there ascribed to the Emperor Shun, who filled the throne about B. C. 2100.

Quaint and ill-defined, they have been retained in use through this long period as a simple expression for an obvious truth, recording as the result of a nation's experience that "to err is human." They contain no nice distinction as to the extent to which our nature is infected with evil; but intimate that its general condition is such that the word *human* may fairly be placed in antithesis to wisdom and virtue.

Yet the prevailing view of human nature maintained by Chinese ethical writers is that of its radical goodness. Though less ancient than the other, this latter is by no means a modern opinion; and it is not a little remarkable that some of those questions which agitated the Christian Church in the *fifth century* were discussed in China nearly a thousand years before. They were not broached by Confucius. His genius was not inquisitive; he was rather an architect seeking to construct a noble edifice, than a chemist testing his materials by minute analysis. And if none are philosophers but those who follow the clew of truth through the mazes of psychological and metaphysical speculation, then he has no right to the title; but if one who loves wisdom, perceiving it by intuition and recommending it with authority, be a philosopher, there are few on the roll of time who deserve a higher position. He was, as Sir J. Mackintosh says of Socrates, "much more a teacher of virtue, than even a searcher after truth."

The next age, however, was characterized by a spirit of investigation which was due to his influence only as the intellectual impulse which he communicated set it to thinking. The moral quality of human nature became a principal subject of discussion; and every position admitted by the subject was successively occupied by some leading mind. Tz'e Sze, the grandson of the Sage, advanced a

theory which implied the goodness of human nature; but Mencius, his disciple (B. C. 317), was the first who distinctly enunciated the doctrine. Kaotze, one of his contemporaries, maintained that nature is destitute of any moral tendency, and wholly passive under the plastic hand of education. A discussion arose between them, a fragment of which, preserved in the works of Mencius, will serve to exhibit their mode of disputation, as well as the position of the parties.

"Nature," said Kaotze, "is a stick of timber, and goodness is the vessel that is carved out of it."

"The wooden bowl," replied Mencius, "is not a natural product of the timber; but the tree requires to be destroyed in order to produce it. Is it necessary to destroy man's nature in order to make him good?"

"Then," said Kaotze, varying his illustration, "human nature may be compared with a stream of water. Open a sluice to the east, and it flows to the east; open one to the west, it flows to the westward. Equally indifferent is human nature with regard to good and evil."

"Water," rejoined Mencius, "is indifferent as to the east or the west; but has it no choice between up and down? Now human nature inclines to good, as water does to run downward. The evil it does is the effect of interference, just as water may be forced to run up hill. Man," he repeats, with rhetoric slightly at variance with his philosophy, "inclines to virtue, as water does to flow downward, or as the wild beast does to seek the forest."

A few years later, Hsüntze, an acute and powerful writer, took the ground that human nature is evil. The influence of education he extolled in even higher terms than Kaotze, maintaining that whatever good it produces, it achieves by a triumph over nature, which is

taught to yield obedience to the dictates of prudence. Virtue is the slow result of teaching, and vice the spontaneous fruit of neglected nature.

Yangtze, about the commencement of the Christian era, endeavored to combine these opposite views; each contained important truth, but neither of them the whole truth. While human nature possessed benevolent affections and a conscience approving of good, it had also perverse desires and a will that chose the evil. It was therefore both bad and good; and the character of each individual took its complexion, as virtuous or vicious, according to the class of qualities most cultivated.

In the great controversy, Mencius gained the day. The two authors last named were placed on the *Index Expurgatorius* of the literary tribunal; and the advocate of human nature was promoted to the second place among the oracles of the Empire for having added a new doctrine or developed a latent one in the Confucian system. This tenet is expressed in the first line of the *San Tze Ching*, an elementary book, which is committed to memory by every schoolboy in China—*Jên chih ch'u hsin pên shan*—"Man commences life with a virtuous nature." But notwithstanding this addition to the national creed, the ancient aphorism of *Shun* is still held in esteem; and a genuine Confucian, in drawing a genealogical tree of the vices, still places the root of evil in the *human* heart.

To remove this contradiction, Chu Hsi, the authorized expositor of the classics, devised a theory somewhat similar to Plato's account of the origin of evil. It evidently partakes of the three principal systems above referred to; professing, according to the first, to vindicate the original goodness of human nature, yet admitting, with another, that it contains some elements of evil—and thus virtually symbolizing with the third, which represents it as of a

mixed character. "The bright principle of virtue," he says in his notes on the *Ta Hsüeh*, "man derives from his heavenly origin; his pure spirit, when undarkened, comprehends all truth, and is adequate to every occasion. But it is obstructed by the physical constitution and beclouded by the animal (lit. *jên yü* the *human*) desires, so that it becomes obscure."

The source of virtue, as indicated in the chart, is *t'ai ho*—"primordial harmony;" and vice is ascribed to the influence of *wu hsing*—"gross matter." The moral character is determined by the prevailing influence, and mankind are accordingly divided into three classes, which are thus described in a popular formula: Men of the first class are good without teaching; those of the second may be made good by teaching; and the last will continue bad in spite of teaching.

The received doctrine in relation to human nature does not oppose such a serious obstacle as might at first be imagined to the reception of Christianity, though there is reason to fear that it may tinge the complexion of Christian theology. The candid and thoughtful will recognize in the Bible a complete view of a subject which their various theories had only presented in detached fragments. In the state of primitive purity, it gives them a heaven-imparted nature in its original perfection; in the supremacy of conscience, it admits a fact on which they rely as the main support of their doctrine; in the corruption of nature, introduced by sin, it gives them a class of facts to which their consciousness abundantly testifies; and in its plan for the restoration of the moral ruin, it excites hope and satisfies reason.

The doctrine of human goodness, though supported by a partial view of facts, seems rather to have been suggested by views of expediency. Mencius denounced the

tenets of Kaotze as pernicious to the cause of morality, and he no doubt considered that to convince men that they are endowed with a virtuous nature is the most effectual method of encouraging them to the practice of virtue. In the absence of revelation, there is nothing better. But while faith in ourselves is a strong motive, faith in God is a stronger one; and while the view that man is endowed with a noble nature, which he only needs to develop according to its own generous instincts, is sublime, there is yet one which is more sublime—viz., that while fallen man is striving for the recovery of his divine original, he must work with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in him.

Part III., the Chart of Moral Excellence as I have called it (or, more literally, of that which is to be *striven after* and *held to*), presents us with goodness in all its forms known to the Chinese. It is chiefly remarkable for its grouping, the entire domain being divided into five families, each ranged under a parent virtue. The Greeks and Romans reckoned four cardinal virtues; but a difference in the mode of division implies no incompleteness in the treatment of the subject. The Chinese do not, because they count only twelve hours in the day instead of twenty-four, pretermitt any portion of time; neither, when they number twenty-eight signs in the zodiac, instead of twelve, do they assign an undue length to the starry girdle of the heavens. The classification is arbitrary; and Cicero makes four virtues cover the whole ground which the Chinese moralist refers to five.

But while, in a formal treatise, definition and explanation may supply the defects of nomenclature or arrangement, the terms employed for the cardinal virtues, are not without effect on the popular mind. In this respect the Chinese have the advantage. Theirs are *Jên*, *I*, *Li*,

Chih, Hsin—Benevolence, Justice, Order,* Wisdom, Good Faith. Those of Plato and Tully are Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. In comparing these, Prudence and Wisdom may be taken as identical, though the former appears to be rather more circumscribed in its sphere and tinged with the idea of self-interest. Temperance and Order, as explained in the respective systems, are also identical—the Latin term contemplating man as an individual, and the Chinese regarding him as a member of society. The former, Cicero defines as *τὸ πρέπον*, and a sense of propriety or love of order is precisely the meaning which the Chinese give to the latter. In the European code, the prominence given to Fortitude is characteristic of a martial people, among whom, at an earlier period, under the name of *ἀρετή*, it usurped the entire realm of virtue. In the progress of society, it was compelled to yield the throne to Justice and accept the place of a vassal, both Greek and Latin moralists asserting that no degree of courage which is not exerted in a righteous cause is worthy of a better appellation than audacity. They erred, therefore, in giving it the position of a cardinal virtue, and the Chinese have exhibited more discrimination by placing it in the retinue of Justice. They describe it by two words, *Chih* and *Yung*. Connected with the former, and explaining its idea, we read the precept, “When you fail, seek help in yourself; stand firm to your post, and let no vague desires draw you from it.” Appended to the latter we have the injunction, “When you see the right, do it; when you know a fault,

* Though *politeness* is the common acceptation of the term as expressing a regard for propriety in social intercourse, in Chinese ethics it has a wider and higher signification. It is precisely what Malebranche makes the basis of his moral system and denominates “the love of universal order.”

correct it. Neither yield to excess, if rich, nor swerve from right, if poor." What a noble conception of moral courage, of true fortitude!

Benevolence and good faith which are quite subordinate in the heathen systems of the West, in that of China are each promoted to the leadership of a grand division. In fact, the whole tone of the Chinese morals, as exhibited in the names and order of their cardinal virtues, is consonant with the spirit of Christianity.* Benevolence leads the way in prompting to positive efforts for the good of others; justice follows, to regulate its exercise; wisdom sheds her light over both; good faith imparts the stability necessary to success; order, or a sense of propriety, by bringing the whole conduct into harmony with the fitness of things, completes the radiant circle; and he whose character is adorned with all these qualities may be safely pronounced *totus teres atque rotundus*.

The theory of moral sentiments early engaged the attention of Chinese philosophers, and particularly the inquiry as to the origin and nature of our benevolent affections. Some, like Locke and Paley, regarded them as

* Cicero thus argues that there could be no occasion for the exercise of any virtue in a state of perfect blessedness, taking up the cardinal virtues *seriatim*: "Si nobis, cum ex hac vita migraremus, in beatorum insulis, ut fabulæ ferunt, immortale ævum degere liceret, quid opus esset eloquentia, cum judicia nulla fierent? aut *ipsis* etiam *virtutibus*? Nec enim *fortitudine* indigeremus, nullo proposito aut labore aut periculo; nec *justitia*, cum esset nihil quod appeteretur alieni; nec *temperantia*, quæ regeret eas quæ nullæ essent libidines; ne *prudencia* quidem egeremus, nullo proposito delectu bonorum et malorum. Una igitur essemus beati cognitione rerum et scientia." He has failed to conceive, as Sir J. Mackintosh well suggests, that there would still be room for the exercise of love—of benevolence. A Chinese, educated to regard benevolence as the prime virtue of life, would naturally give it the first place in his ideal of the future state.

wholly artificial—the work of education. Others, like Hobbes and Mandeville, represented them as spontaneous and natural, but still no more than varied phases of that one ubiquitous Proteus—self-love. Mencius, with Bishop Butler, views them as disinterested and original. To establish this, he resorts to his favorite mode of reasoning, and supposes the case of a spectator moved by the misfortune of a child falling into a well. Hobbes would have described the pity of the beholder as the fruit of self-love acting through the imagination—the “fiction of future calamity to himself.” Mencius says his efforts to rescue the child would be incited, not by a desire to secure the friendship of its parents or the praise of his neighbors, nor even to relieve himself from the pain occasioned by the cries of the child, but by a spontaneous feeling which pities distress and seeks to alleviate it.

The man who thus vindicates our nature from the charge of selfishness in its best affections sometimes expatiates on their social utility. He does so, however, only to repress utilitarianism of a more sordid type. When the Prince of Liang inquired what he had brought to enrich his kingdom, “Nothing,” he replied, “but benevolence and justice;” and he then proceeded to show, with eloquent earnestness, how the pursuit of wealth would tend to anarchy, while that of virtue would insure happiness and peace. An earlier writer, Meitze, made the principle of benevolence the root of all the virtues; and in advocating the duty of *equal* and *universal love*, he seems to have anticipated the fundamental maxim of Jonathan Edwards that virtue consists in *love to being* as such, and in *proportion to the amount of being*. This led him to utter the noble sentiment that he would “submit his body to be ground to powder if by so doing he could benefit mankind.”

The doctrine of Meitze is rejected by the moralists of the established school as heretical, on the ground of its inconsistency with the exercise in due degree of the relative affections, such as filial piety, fraternal love, etc. They adopted a more cautious criterion of virtue—that of the moderate exercise of all the natural faculties. *Virtus est medium vitiorum et utrinque reductum* is with them a familiar principle. One of the Four Books, the *Chung Yung*, is founded on it. But instead of treating the subject with the analytic accuracy with which it is elaborated by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, the author kindles with the idea of absolute perfection, and indites a sublime rhapsody on the character of him who holds on his way, undeviating and unimpeded, between a twofold phalanx of opposing vices.

Part IV. is the counterpart of the preceding, and is interesting mainly on account of the use for which it is designed. The whole chart is practical, and is intended, the author tells us, to be suspended in the chamber of the student as a constant monitor. The terms in which he states this contain an allusion to a sentiment engraved by one of the ancient emperors on his wash-basin: "Let my heart be daily cleansed and renewed, let it be kept clean and new forever." This part of his work has for its special object to aid the reader in detecting the moral impurities that may have attached themselves to his character, and carrying forward a process of daily and constant improvement.

To some it may be a matter of surprise to find this exercise at all in vogue in a country where a divine religion has not imparted the highest degree of earnestness in the pursuit of virtue. The number who practise it is not large; but even in pagan China, the thorny path of self-knowledge exhibits "here and there a traveller."

Tsêng Futze, an eminent disciple of Confucius, and the Xenophon of his *Memorabilia*, thus describes his own practice: "I every day examine myself on three points. In exertions on behalf of others, have I been unfaithful? In intercourse with others, have I been untrue? The instruction I have heard, have I made my own?"

An example so revered could not remain without imitators. Whether any of them has surpassed the model is doubtful; but his "three points" they have multiplied into the bristling array displayed in the chart, which they daily press in to their bosoms, as some papal ascetics were wont to do their jagged belts. Some of them, in order to secure greater fidelity in this unpleasant duty, are accustomed to perform it in the family temple, where they imagine their hearts laid bare to the view of their ancestors, and derive encouragement from their supposed approval. The practice is a beautiful one, but it indicates a want. It shows that human virtue is conscious of her weakness; and in climbing the roughest steeps feels compelled to lean on the arm of religion.

In a few cases this impressive form of domestic piety may prove efficacious; but the benefit is due to a figment of the imagination similar to that which Epictetus recommends when he suggests that the student of virtue shall conceive himself to be living in the presence of Socrates. If fancy is thus operative, how much more effectual must faith be—that faith which rises into knowledge and makes one realize that he is acting under the eye of ever-present Deity!

It is one of the glories of Christianity that by diffusing this sentiment she has made virtue not an occasional visitor to our planet, but brought her down to dwell familiarly with men. What otherwise would have been only the severe discipline of a few philosophers, she has made the

daily habit of myriads.* How many persons in how many lands now close each day of life by comparing every item of their conduct with a far more perfect "chart for self-examination" than our author has furnished?†

Next to the knowledge of right and wrong Confucius placed "sincerity of purpose" in pursuing the right, as an essential in the practice of virtue; but as he expressed only the vaguest notions of a Supreme Being, and enjoined for popular observance no higher form of religion than the worship of the ancestral manes, a sense of responsibility, and, by consequence, "sincerity of purpose," are sadly deficient among his disciples. Some of the more earnest, on meeting with a religion which reveals to them a heart-searching God, a sin-atoning Saviour, a soul-sanctifying Spirit, and an immortality of bliss, have joyfully embraced it, confessing that they find therein motives and supports of which their own system is wholly destitute.

GENERAL INFERENCES.

On this sheet (the chart above translated) we have a projection of the national mind. It indicates the high grade in the scale of civilization attained by the people among whom it originated, exhibiting all the elements of an elaborate morality. Political ethics are skilfully connected with private morals; and the virtues and vices are

* "Religion," says Sir James Mackintosh, speaking of Plato, "had not then, besides her own discoveries, brought down the most awful and the most beautiful forms of moral truth to the humblest station in human society."

† There are many evening hymns in which the review of the day is beautifully and touchingly expressed, but in none perhaps better than in that of Gellert commencing "*Ein tag ist wieder hin.*"

marshalled in a vast array, which required an advanced state of society for their development.

The accuracy with which these various traits of character are noted implies the same thing; and the correctness of the moral judgments here recorded infers something more than culture—it discloses a grand fact of our nature, that, whatever may be thought of innate ideas, it contains inherent principles which produce the same fruits in all climates.

These tables indicate, at the same time, that the Chinese have made less proficiency in the study of mind than in that of morals. This is evident from some confusion (more observable in the original than in the translation) of faculties, sentiments, and actions. The system is, on the whole, pretty well arranged; but there are errors and omissions enough to show that their ethics, like their physics, are merely the records of phenomena which they observe *ab extra* without investigating their causes and relations. While they expatiate on the virtues, they make but little inquiry into the nature of virtue; while insisting on various duties, they never discuss the ground of obligation; and while duties are copiously expounded, not a word is said on the subject of rights.

The combined influence of an idolatrous religion and a despotic government, under which there can be no such motto as *Dieu et mon droit*, may account for this latter deficiency. But similar *lacunæ* are traceable in so many directions that we are compelled to seek their explanation in a subjective cause—in some peculiarity of the Chinese mind.

They have, for instance, no system of psychology, and the only rude attempt at the formation of one consists in an enumeration of the organs of perception. These they express as *wu kuan*, the “five senses.” But what

are they? The eyes, ears, nose, mouth; and not the skin or nerves, but the heart. The sense of touch, which alone possesses the power of waking us from the Brahma dream of a universe floating in our own brain, and convincing us of the objective reality of an external world, is utterly ignored; to say nothing of the absurdity of classing the "heart"—the intellect (for so they intend the word)—with those passive media of intelligence. This elementary effort dates from the celebrated Mencius; and, perhaps for that very reason, the mind of the moderns has not advanced beyond it, as one of their pious emperors abdicated the throne rather than be guilty of reigning longer than his grandfather.

Another instance of philosophical classification equally ancient, equally authoritative, and equally absurd, is that of the five elements. They were given as *chin, mu, shui, huo, t'u*—i. e., metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. Now not to force this into a disparaging contrast with the results of our recent science, which recognizes nothing as an element but an ultimate form of matter, we may fairly compare it with the popular division of "four elements." The principle of classification being the enumeration of the leading forms of inorganic matter which enter into the composition of organic bodies, the Chinese have violated it by introducing wood into the category; and they evince an obtuseness of observation utterly inconsistent with the possession of philosophic talent in not perceiving the important part which atmospheric air performs in the formation of other bodies. The extent to which they adhere to the quintal enumeration or classification by "fives" illustrates, in a rather ludicrous manner, the same want of discrimination. Thus, while in mind they have the five senses, and in matter the five elements, in morals they reckon five virtues, in society

five relations, in astronomy five planets, in ethnology five races, in optics five colors, in music five notes, in the culinary art five tastes; and, not to extend the catalogue, they divide the horizon into *five quarters*.

These instances evince a want of analytical power; and the deficiency is still further displayed by the absence of any analysis of the sounds of their language until they were made acquainted with the alphabetical Sanskrit; the non-existence, to the present day, of any inquiry into the forms of speech which might be called a grammar, or of any investigation of the processes of reasoning corresponding with our logic. While they have soared into the attenuated atmosphere of ontological speculation, they have left all the regions of physical and abstract science almost as trackless as the arctic snows.

It would be superfluous to vindicate the Chinese from the charge of mental inferiority in the presence of that immense social and political organization which has held together so many millions of people for so many thousands of years, and especially of numerous arts, now dropping their golden fruits into the lap of our own civilization, whose roots can be traced to the soil of that ancient empire. But a strange defect must be admitted in the national mind. We think, however, that it is more in its development than in its constitution, and may be accounted for by the influence of education.

If we include in that term all the influences that affect the mind, the first place is due to language; and a language whose primary idea is the representation of the objects of sense, and which is so imperfect a vehicle of abstract thought that it is incapable of expressing by single words such ideas as space, quality, relation, etc., must have seriously obstructed the exercise of the intellect in that direction. A servile reverence for antiquity which makes

it sacrilege to alter the crude systems of the ancients increased the difficulty; and the government brought it to the last degree of aggravation by admitting, in the public-service examinations, a very limited number of authors, with their expositors, to whose opinions conformity is encouraged by honors, and from whom dissent is punished by disgrace.

These fetters can only be stricken off by the hand of Christianity; and we are not extravagant in predicting that a stupendous intellectual revolution will attend its progress. Revealing an omnipresent God as Lord of the Conscience it will add a new hemisphere to the world of morals; stimulating inquiry in the spirit of the precept "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," it will subvert the blind principle of deference; and perhaps its grandest achievement in the work of mental emancipation may be the superseding of the ancient ideographic language by providing a medium better adapted to the purposes of a Christian civilization. It would only be a repetition of historic triumphs if some of the vernacular dialects, raised from the depths where they now lie in neglect, and shaped by the forces which heave them to the surface, should be made, under the influence of a new sunshine, to teem with the rich productions of a new literature, philosophy, and science.

太和元氣

五

五行屬氣

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日流於汙
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主之

透下其防以所下其底

24

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得其真味
之中酒

吾哉厚飲
之不忌

其生如雲
之更公

竟多國我
之不工

兩色好家
之無睡

身心性命
之難斷

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之醉也

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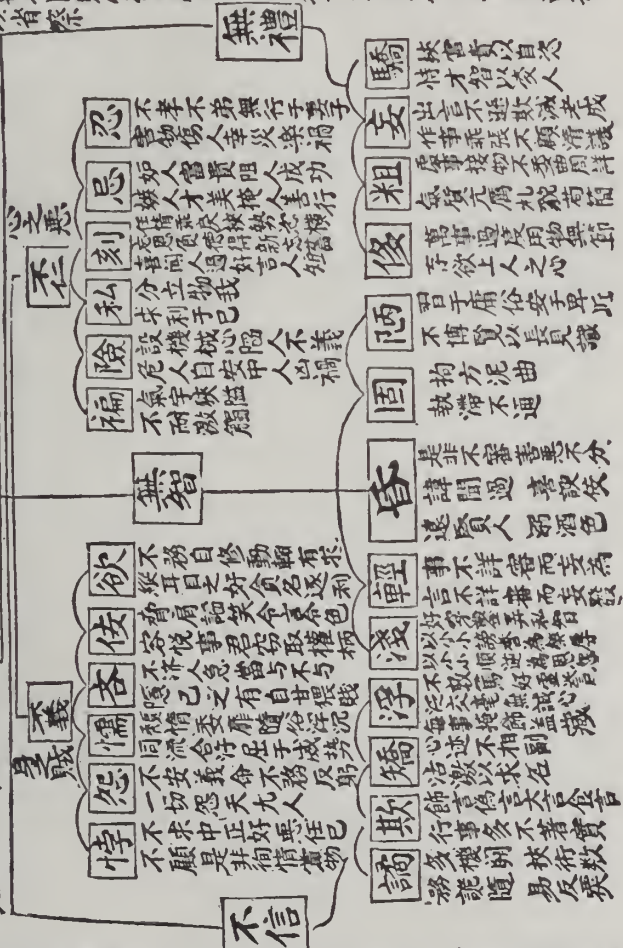
為上達自進
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道心

閱大學圖自知正心矣然難收易放者也故再輯心圖

問候存圖則心德可常存矣然猶恐非幾之易貢也故復
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勉加則無圖察省之改則有



右各圖總勸學人時時收放心過人欲循天理自然
入道工夫聖賢莫不由此而進有走達者慎勿忽之

XIII

CHINESE IDEAS OF INSPIRATION

THE word "inspiration," as applied to the notions of the Chinese, must be taken with considerable latitude, as expressing their conceptions of a superhuman authority, which pervades and lies behind their Sacred Books, as the source and basis of their teachings.

As their Sacred Books belong to three leading schools of religious thought,—not to speak of numberless alloys,—it is not to be supposed that the views of these schools on the subject of inspiration coincide more closely than on other matters in regard to which they are in fact widely divergent. It is hardly possible that the materialism of the Taoist, the idealism of the Buddhist, and the ethical Sadduceeism of the Confucianist, should hold much in common on the subject of inspiration. We shall accordingly point out the peculiar form which the idea of inspiration assumes in connection with each of them.

While the high social development of the Chinese, their vast numbers, and their long history, give value to any elements of their fundamental beliefs, in order to be of interest to us, these must be taken at a date prior to their contact with Christianity.

I

To begin with Taoism:—Indigenous to China, its root idea is the belief in the possibility of acquiring a mastery

over matter, so as to change its forms at will, and thus protect ourselves against decay and death.

Those who have attained immortality constitute a pantheon, ruling over the material world and presiding over the destinies of man. Material in its origin, this school gradually evolved a system of belief strikingly analogous to the so-called "spiritualism," which not long ago attracted so much attention in our Western World.

Instead, however, of holding that all spirits are indiscriminately ferried over to the farther shore, it considers that those of the profane multitude, not being sufficiently concentrated to resist the inroads of decay, vanish into air and cease to be; while a favored few, by dint of persevering effort, subdue their animal nature, and weave its fibres into a compact unity that defies destruction. A favorite analogy to illustrate this process is their theory of the evolution of gold, which, as they believe, originally a base metal, passes upward through a succession of forms, all liable to tarnish or corrode, until it reaches a state in which its perfected essence remains forever unchangeable. The diamond,—a gem of "purest ray serene,"—smiling at the sharpest steel, and mocking the hottest fire, is another symbol frequently used; and it might have done much to confirm their faith in this theory, had their science gone far enough to connect the gem that shines in immortal splendor with the fossilized carbon that lies hidden in the bosom of the earth, or with those evanescent forms of vitalized carbon that beautify its surface.

The happy few, as precious as gold and as rare as the diamond, who attain to immortality, do not leave their bodies behind them, like cast-off clothing; nor would their bodies cause the boat of Charon to draw a deeper draught, for the body itself is transformed and becomes

a "spiritual body," with changed qualities and new powers. Its qualities are such in general as we ascribe to spirit; its powers are limited only by the stage of its progress,—a progress that rises from sphere to sphere without a bound.

Among the acquired powers of these immortals, one which occupies a leading place is that of spiritual manifestation. These *hsien jên*, or genii, as they are called, are of various grades; and all of them are capable of renewing their intercourse with human beings, among whom they walk invisible. It is seldom that they re-appear in their primitive shape; but they frequently make their presence felt through the intervention of suitable media.

A favorite medium is the human body, in a hypnotic condition; and through such, when properly invoked, the genii are wont to speak to mortals, as Apollo spoke through the Delphic Priestess. Their oracles in such cases relate, in general, to the cure of disease, or the conduct of family affairs. In early times, they aspired to the direction of affairs of state; but the detection of numerous impostures brought them into discredit, and their influence is now restrained to a humbler sphere, though it is still real, and by no means to be despised.

Another medium is the *fu lun*, an instrument which we may describe as a magic pen. It consists of a vertical stick, suspended like a pendulum from a cross-bar. The bar is supported at each end by a votary of the genii, care being taken that it shall rest on the hand as freely as an oscillating engine does on its bearings. A table is sprinkled with meal; and, after being properly invoked, the spirit manifests his presence by slight irregular motions of the pen or pendulum, which leaves its trace in the meal. These marks are deciphered by competent

authorities, who make known the response from the spirit world.

This will be recognized as an early form of planchette. In the Far East, it has been in vogue for more than a thousand years; and there is as yet no sign that it "has had its day." Not merely Taoists by profession, but scholars, who call themselves Confucian, believe in it with a more or less confiding faith. When they resort to it with a serious purpose, they usually get an answer which they accept *bonâ fide*, whether it meet their wishes or oppose them. Often, however, they call in the magic pen to supply diversion for the late hours of a convivial party; and in such cases, they tell me, they are sometimes surprised by the result,—an invisible person evidently joining the festive circle, and solving or creating mysteries.

Skeptical as are the Chinese *literati*, no one that I have seen doubts the genuineness of some of the communications so obtained. I have had such sent to me from a distant place, with the assurance that they were obtained through the magic pen at the altars of the gods; and, whatever I may have thought on the subject, I could not doubt that the sender believed in them.

Where such credulity renders the public mind as susceptible to impressions as the meal does a writing-table, it is obvious that revelations for the purpose of religious instruction are to be expected. The fact is that the magic pen is one of the most prolific sources of religious literature. Mahomet claimed that the Koran, was brought leaf by leaf from Paradise by the angel Gabriel. The hierophants of China impose on the credulity of their countrymen, by ascribing their own teachings to revelations made by planchette.

Some of these so-called revelations are deservedly

popular, on account of the beauty of their style and the excellence of their subject matter; and they are held in special reverence, as worthy expressions of the mind of deified Sages.

To this category belong:—

1.—The *Kan Ying P'ien*, a treatise on retribution, derived by this method from no less a personage than Laotze, the great founder of the Taoist sect.

2.—The *Chüeh Shih Ching*, or world-waking appeal of Kuan Ti, tutelar god of the reigning dynasty.

3.—The *Yin Chi Wên*, or Book of Rewards and Punishments, referred to Wên Ch'ang, the god of letters.

Others might be added, but I forbear to cite them, because they “attain not to the first three.”

The last cited is ascribed to Wên Ch'ang, the god of letters, a Taoist deity much in favor with scholars of the Confucian School; for, wide apart as they are in fundamental principles, the dividing lines of the three sects are now well-nigh obliterated. Each borrows deities from the other, and priests of one are found in charge of temples that belong to the other;—a result, not so much due to *rapprochement* in their authorized teachings, as to a chronic confusion in the popular mind.

II

Buddhism, as the stronger faith, has “drawn the cover to its own side,”—adopting many Taoist usages, and, among them, the practice of procuring spiritualistic revelations. In vain do the orthodox denounce it, as tending to corrupt the canon, and as derogatory to the dignity of the deities invoked; the practice continues to flourish.

Of the extent to which it is carried, you may judge from the following indignant protest, which I translate

from the *Hsiu Chih Yao Yen*, a practical guide for the Buddhist priesthood:—

“In these latter days, men’s minds are superficial and false. There is nothing that they do not counterfeit. Even in the dissemination of good books, they resort to falsehood to aid their circulation. Their own rude language, which has no meaning more than skin-deep, they palm off as revealed through the magic pen,—thus imposing on the ignorant.

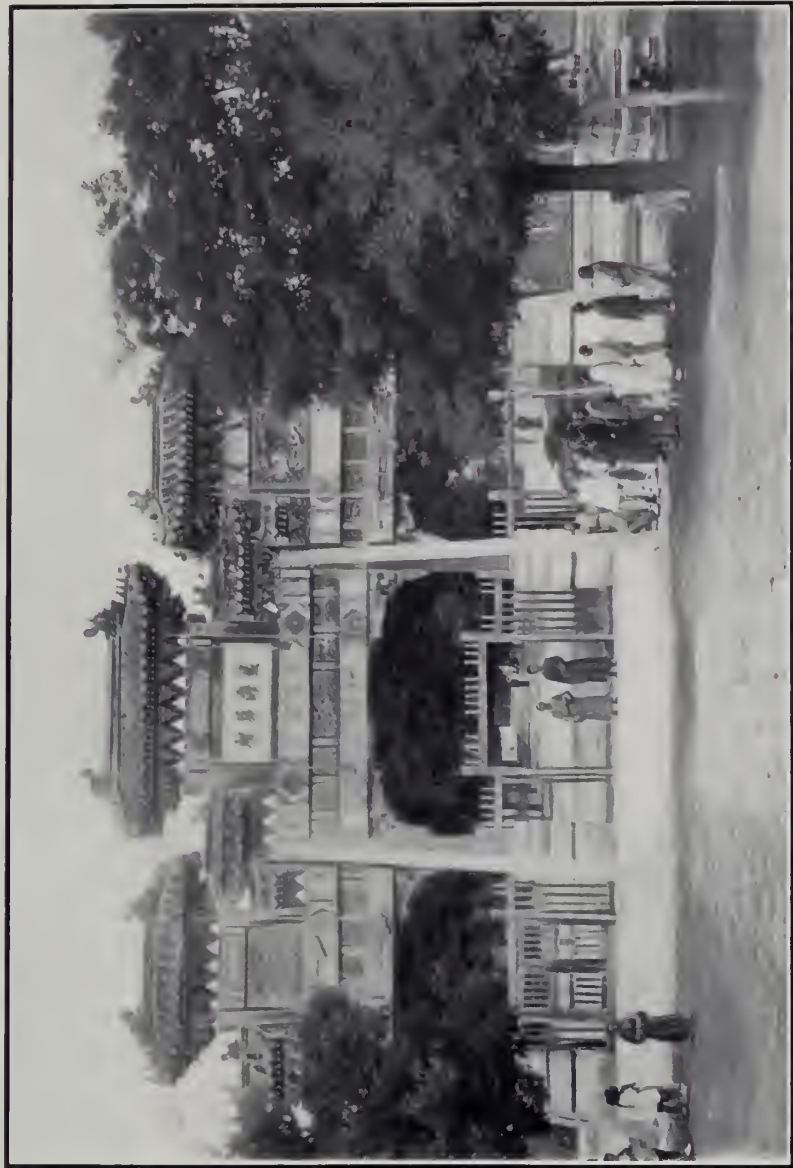
“They mostly father their effusions on Wên Ch’ang and Lü Tsu; less frequently, on Kuan Ti. Only think of it:—In case of ordinary books or pictures, to falsify the authorship is held as an odious crime. How much more hateful the crime of adulterating the teachings of gods and sages! When book-shelves are loaded with fabrications, the circulation of the genuine article is impeded. Instances of this kind of outrage on Holy Names are too frequent to enumerate.

“Recently some cases of a truly extraordinary character have come to light. Shameless forgeries are put forth as books of Buddha! Buddha himself is sometimes invoked to indite a commentary, and even Taoist genii are called on to reveal an exposition of Buddhist classics. Then we have lists of Buddha’s titles, purporting to emanate from spirit revelations. The blunders of these books go without castigation, and falsehood gains strength day by day. Formerly moral tracts were aids to virtue; to-day they are used to mislead mankind.”

Here follows a list of spurious books, ending with the remark that “names of men and places, though formed on Sanskrit models, are so clumsily constructed that their rough angles pierce through the thin disguise; and the more extended a discourse, the more thoroughly does the fabricator succeed in exposing his imposture.”

To note the adoption of this Taoist practice by a section of Buddhism is not foreign to our subject, because it is Chinese in origin; but, to ascend the stream and treat of inspiration from the stand-point of orthodox Buddhism would lead us away from China. It would carry us into the world of Hindu mysticism, where Sakyamuni laid the foundation of his conquering creed.

Suffice it to say that, to the Buddhist, there is no form of existence higher than Buddha,—no authority above that of Buddha. He does not look beyond Buddha to an all-pervading spirit, as Christians look through Christ up to the Father of Spirits. For him, Buddha is ultimate; and, as the name signifies supreme intelligence, so all believers accept the utterances of Buddha as truth not to be called in question. With them, the only possible question is that touching the authenticity of those utterances,—in other words, respecting the proper contents of the Buddhistic canon. How much of that canon fell from the lips of Gautama, and how far the teachings of his followers are deducible from his original revelations, are questions of serious import; or rather they would become such, if once the spirit of critical inquiry were fairly aroused. If, among the heterogeneous materials composing the canon as acknowledged by one or other of the schools, the spurious utterances ascribed to Buddha were sifted from the genuine, there would remain but a very small residuum. Among his subordinates, the degree of authority conceded to each is decided according to their grade of intelligence or rank in the canonical hierarchy; but no spiritual influence emanating from a higher source is admitted. This is true of primitive or atheistic Buddhism; but in Buddhism, as modified by time, and by contact with other creeds, we find a superintending and



GATEWAY OF LAMA TEMPLE

enlightening influence from the spirit of Buddha freely acknowledged.

III

The ideas of Confucianists in regard to inspiration differ widely from those of both the preceding schools. They are the ideas, not of a sect, but of the bulk of the Chinese people.

When the three schools are named in series, the Ju, or Confucian, stands at the head; but when the Confucian is spoken of by itself, it is generally described as *ta chiao*,—the great, universal, or catholic school. Its tenets form the bed-rock of Chinese civilization, whatever may be the complexion of the over-lying soil. The yellow of Buddhism and the black of Taoism may be everywhere detected, but they form only a superficial tinge on the original background. Every Buddhist or Taoist (outside of the priesthood) is, first of all, a Confucianist; but the converse is by no means true,—the more educated Chinese in general reject both the other sects, and speak disrespectfully of their claims, though not exempt from their influence. Hence a common error in estimating the number of Buddhists on the globe; for, unlike Burmah and Siam, where Buddhism is established by law, the intellectual culture of China flows apart from Buddhism; and, in China, the priesthood of Buddha, with but few redeeming exceptions, have sunk to the condition of an ignorant and despised caste.

The canon of Confucianism is, therefore, pre-eminently the canon of China; and, to find what views the Chinese hold as to its inspiration, we have in the first place to turn to the canon itself.

The canon consists,—if we reject the enumeration of thirteen books as too wide, and accept that of nine as more exact,—of two classes of works:—the pre-Confucian, and the post-Confucian. The *Li Chi*, or “Book of Rites,” is classed with the former, though compiled under the dynasty of Han, because it professes to preserve the traditions of an earlier age. Held in high esteem, it is nevertheless deemed somewhat apocryphal. The other four pre-Confucian books were all edited by the great Sage, and issued with his *imprimatur*.

They contain such fragments of antiquity,—historical, poetical, and philosophical,—as he thought worth while to preserve. Among them there is not much of unity to be discerned “in member, joint, or limb;” and, as a whole, they are not regarded as emanating from a supernatural source.

There are, however, in this collection, two sketches of a rudimentary philosophy, for which a supernatural origin is distinctly asserted. One of these is a table of mystic symbols, from which diagrams of the “Book of Changes” were subsequently evolved.

In the reign of Fu Hsi, 2800 B. C., this was brought up from the waters of the Yellow River on the back of a beast, which was “half horse and half alligator;” signifying, if we admit a grain of truth in the legend, that the first eight diagrams, which form the basis of the sixty-four in the “Book of Changes,” were suggested by the mysterious markings on the carapace of a tortoise. That the figures on the shell of a tortoise were employed in divination is attested by history. Princes kept sacred shells in temples erected for the purpose, and the shell only ceased to be consulted, when the ampler book became known and accepted as a treasury of divine oracles.

The other fragment of direct revelation is an outline

of natural and political philosophy called the *Hung Fan*, or "Great Plan." It is said to have been brought to the Emperor Yu, from the waters of the river Lo, by a monster somewhat similar to that which figures in the preceding legend.

Both stories were indorsed by Confucius, if the Appendix to the "Book of Changes" be his work; and the highest scholars of China continue to receive them as true beyond a question.

Leaving the barbarous age in which tortoise and dragon are messengers of the gods, we come to a more rational period, when man becomes the medium through which the Will of Heaven is revealed. This view is first enunciated in the "Book of Odes" (*circa* 1000 B. C.), in a passage which remains in use as a popular formula:—"Heaven, having given life to men, raised up princes to rule them and teachers to instruct them,"—a statement which, with all the light of our developed Christianity, it is not easy to improve upon.

The general conception, of teachers providentially raised up, became at length restricted to that of certain eminent men who were looked on as infallible guides. They were called *shêng jên*, a phrase commonly rendered "holy men," but one which expresses wisdom rather than holiness. They were numerous in remote antiquity,—inventors of arts sharing the honor along with the founders of human society. Thus Fu Hsi, who instituted marriage, was a *shêng jên*; Hwang Ti, who invented medicine, was a *shêng jên*; Tsang Chieh, the inventor of letters, and Ta Nao, the author of the most ancient calendar, are also venerated as *shêng jên*. In later ages, such paragons of wisdom were few, and their advent always heralded by presages of an unmistakable character.

The sage of sages is Confucius. He makes no direct

claim to inspiration, and always speaks of himself with becoming modesty. According to himself, there are virtues to which he has not attained, and there is knowledge that lies beyond his range. Yet he evinces at times a sublime consciousness of a peculiar mission. When in peril, he exclaims:—"If it be the will of Heaven to preserve my doctrine for the benefit of mankind, what power can my enemies have over me?" At other times, confident of the truth of his teachings, he appeals, not to the people of his own day, but to the judgment of sages that are to appear in distant ages.

His teaching was from Heaven, but it was not imparted to him in a supernatural way. "How," he exclaims, "does Heaven speak,—what is the language it addresses to men? The seasons follow their course, and all things spring into life,—this is the language of Heaven." In his view, it was the province of the sage to interpret Nature, not merely as she lives in the forms of matter, but as she breathes in the soul of man.

This conception of the *shêng jên*, or sage, had begun to take shape in the dawn of Chinese civilization. Confucius, who did more than any other to fix the forms of that civilization by a wise selection of the best traditions, seized on the idea as one of essential importance, and gave it precision, without arrogating the character.

His grandson, K'ung Chieh, half a century later, gave the world a theory of ethics, based, like that of Aristotle, on the assumption that good is a middle term between two evils. Unlike the Stagyrite, he gives free scope to a fervid imagination, and draws a glowing picture of concrete good in the character of the *shêng jên*, or perfect man. The passage is an eloquent apotheosis of wisdom and virtue, for which his great ancestor confessedly served as a human model.

Not only has posterity permitted Confucius to remain on that exalted pedestal, but each generation has contributed to raise him higher.

A few extracts from this treatise will serve to exhibit the Sage as expounder of the Will of Heaven:—

“None but the most sincere is able to exhaust the capabilities of his own nature. By so doing, he aids the work of heaven and earth, and takes his place as third among the powers of the universe.”

“He who possesses this perfect sincerity attains to prophetic foresight. This quality, therefore, partakes of the divine.”

“Great is the Holy Sage (or *shêng jên*) ; all the books of all the rites wait for him to fulfill them.”

“He can appeal to the gods above, because he knows Heaven; and to the wise of coming times, because he knows men.”

“He speaks, and none hesitates to believe; he acts, and none fails to approve.”

“His fame overflows the boundaries of China, and extends to barbarous peoples. Wherever ship or chariot can go, wherever sun and moon give light, wherever frosts and dews descend,—there is no one who has blood and breath, who does not honor and love such a man. Therefore, he is said to be the equal of Heaven.”

This description of the ideally perfect man, drawn as it was from the teaching and example of Confucius, caused him to be accepted in that character. Mencius, the St. Paul of Confucianism, its last and greatest apostle, confirmed the judgment of the author of “The Mean.” His words are:—“From the time that human life appeared on earth down to this day, the world has seen no man like Confucius.” His estimate of China’s greatest teacher has been ratified by succeeding ages.

In process of time, speculative thought attained a higher development; and, in the theory of the universe which it produced, the *shêng jên* holds a definite place. Heaven, earth, and man, form a triad of agents, as hinted already in the "Doctrine of the Mean";—the first representing self-acting spirit; the second, plastic or passive matter; the third, man;—a child born of their union,—a microcosm or epitome of the universe, his soul reflecting the pure spirit of Heaven, his body composed of the gross elements of earth. For the Sage it is reserved to connect the two in a perfect union. Accordingly we see, in all the temples of Confucius, a central inscription just over the shrine of the spirit tablet:—*Yü t'ien ti wei ts'an*,—"He forms a triad with heaven and earth."

The conception is obviously pantheistic. In the person of the Sage, the dual powers find their harmony completed. He receives no spoken communication; asks no illuminating influence; but, embodying in its highest degree the spiritual essence of both, he becomes thereby an infallible expositor of the universe,—a law-giver to the human race. It is said of him,—“He speaks, and his word is law to the world; he acts, and his conduct is an unerring example.”

It is in this light that the Chinese, without exception, are accustomed to look on the last of their Sages. He is not a god, but a perfect man; not a prophet who utters occasional oracles, but, in word and deed, a constant manifestation of ideal excellence. He does not speak in the name of a higher power; but, if that power were conceived as speaking, it could add nothing to the authority of the Sage.

How near this conception approaches to the Hindu view of Buddha, as the perfect embodiment of intelligence and virtue, needs not to be pointed out. In the

Confucian system, however, there is a vague personality called Heaven, above the Sage; while, in the Buddhist, there is none.

It follows that everything that bears the seal of such an authority is sacred in the highest degree. The verbal text of his books is not to be altered, no matter what faults may be detected by rational criticism. Thus, incomplete and pleonastic expressions,—the errors of ancient copyists,—are faithfully reproduced, much as our Hebrew Bibles reproduce the "*ayin suspensum*," and other errors of transcription. This superstitious reverence for the letter of the canon symbolizes and fosters that unprogressive conservatism which has become the unenviable distinction of the Chinese race.

Confucius, it ought to be said, and his great disciple Mencius, lend no countenance to such unreasoning worship of antiquity. The latter says boldly,—“It were better to have no books than to be bound to believe all that our books contain,”—referring, it is thought, to the *Shu*, the canonical book of ancient history. And Confucius lays it down, as the first duty of a ruler, to aim at the “renovation of his people.”

In conclusion, it would hardly be pertinent to raise the question whether the views of inspiration, which we have been considering, are favorable or adverse to the adoption of Christianity. The great Sage, so far from arrogating definitive completeness for his own system, leads his disciples to expect the appearance of *shêng jên* in coming ages. Nor is the advent of such Heaven-sent teachers limited to China. There is, therefore, nothing to prevent a sound Confucian accepting Christ as the Light of the World, without abandoning his faith in Confucius as a special teacher for the Chinese people. “Confucius *plus* Christ” is a formula to which he has no insuper-

able objection; but the man, who approaches him with such an alternative as "Christ *or* Confucius," is not likely to meet with a patient hearing.

As a matter of fact, native Christians continue to believe in the mission of Confucius, much as converted Jews do in that of Moses.

XIV

BUDDHISM A PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY

THE religion which above all others has a right to claim serious study, in comparison with Christianity, is Buddhism. It has been brought forward of late as a rival to Christianity, not merely by its traditional votaries, but by poets and philosophers,* educated in the schools of Christendom. The poet purloined the ornaments of the daughters of Zion to deck an Eastern beauty,† and the philosopher has endeavored to persuade Western thinkers that their highest wisdom is to sit at the feet of the gymnosophists of India.

One scarcely knows whether the gospel would be more discredited by being set forth as plagiarizing in part from the traditions of India, or by being proven to be a less effectual remedy for human woe than the pessimism of Sakyamuni.

There is a lawsuit now pending in the courts of England, in which a claimant seeks to oust the present occupant of a great estate by proving that he belongs to an older branch of the family, and that his title ante-dates the other by more than a century.

In the forum of the world, the contest for priority of title to the traditions referred to is of infinitely higher

* Notably Arnold and Schopenhaur.

† Since this was first published Sir Edwin Arnold has given us a noble *Palinodia* in his "Light of the World."

moment. After the learned investigations of Dr. Kellogg, it can scarcely be said of it *adhuc sub judice lis est*; and yet it is one of those cases in which defeat is never acknowledged,—in which, in fact, we may expect to see the old pretensions advanced again and again with as much confidence as if they had never been refuted.

It is not my intention to go into this question at length, on the present occasion; but I may say, in passing, that a new and weighty authority has come forward to refute the claims of Buddhism. In a paper in the “Nineteenth Century” (July, 1888), the Bishop of Colombo says: “We must distinguish,” in reference to Buddhism, “two very different sources of information, only one of which I shall speak of as historical. The one source is the *Tripitaka*, or threefold collection of sacred books, which forms the canon of Southern Buddhism; these I call the books of 250 B. C.

“The other source is the ‘Biographies of Buddha’ and the *Lalita Vistara*, which are of uncertain date, between the first and sixth centuries (A. D.). These last are the sources of Arnold’s ‘Light of Asia.’

“We have been led to the only source of history,—the *Pitakas*. The resultant biography of Gautama* shows nothing supernatural; and nothing which, in those days, was strange. The life of Gautama contains nothing more strange than does the life of Shakespeare.”

The Bishop shows conclusively the unhistorical character of much of that material which Sir Edwin Arnold has woven into his beautiful poem. As a poet, he had an unquestionable right to employ it; but it behooves all serious thinkers to beware how they accept poetry in place of history.†

* The name for Buddha, in general use in Ceylon and Burmah.

† Three Lectures on Buddhism.

Dr. E. T. Eitel, who has made a special study of Buddhism, summarizes his conclusions in these words:—

“There is not a single Buddhist manuscript that can vie in antiquity and authority with the oldest codices of the Gospels. The most ancient Buddhist classics contain but few details of Buddha’s life, and none whatever of those above-mentioned peculiarly Christian characteristics. Nearly all the above-given legends, that refer to events that happened many centuries before Christ, cannot be proved to have been in circulation earlier than the fifth or sixth century after Christ.”

Dr. Eitel points to early Nestorian Missions as what he calls “the precise source” of these “apparently Christian elements.”

That Buddhism borrowed much in subsequent ages is incontestable, and that Christianity borrowed something is highly probable. Professor Max Müller has shown that Buddha himself has been canonized as a Christian Saint, ordered to be worshipped on the 27th of November, under the title of St. Josaphat.*

The fact is that the resemblances between the two great religions of the East and West lie far deeper than the external habiliment of poetical tradition, or the superficial analogies of religious orders and religious ritual. They are traceable in the general development and practical doctrines of both.

Both are found to pursue a course exactly the reverse of that mapped out in a celebrated *dictum* of Auguste Comte; their initial stage was not far removed from positivism, and yet both evolve a spiritual universe; one burst the bonds of Hindu caste, the other broke down the walls of Jewish isolation, and each stretched forth its hand to the nations with the offer of a new evangel.

* “Contemporary Review” for July, 1870.

Beginning as wide apart in spirit as in geographical situation, they have gradually approached each other, so that they have come, in the course of ages, to occupy the same ground in both senses, and each to lend a tinge to the other.

For the objects of our present inquiry, it matters little how inconsistent the Buddhism of one country or of one age may be with that of another; what we have to do is to estimate its effects. No religion has ever shown itself so plastic as that of Buddha, not only chameleon-like, taking its hue from its surroundings, but promulgating at different times doctrines contradictory and self-destructive. Beginning as a philosophy of self-discipline, it developed into a religious cult. At the outset professing atheism pure and simple, in the end it brought forth a pantheon of gods; and, most wonderful of all, raised a denier of God's existence to the throne of the Supreme. After such changes in doctrine, it is hardly surprising that a system, which preferred poverty to riches, and deserts to cities, should in later times seize the revenue of States and place its mendicant friars on the throne of kings. The controversialist, who has to confront Buddhism as an opposing force, may make the most of its contradictions and errors; but for ourselves, on the present occasion, we have only to inquire whether or not Buddhism, under any or all of its phases, as seen in China, has done good or evil.

At the present it may be an obstruction, but that does not prove that its past influence has been otherwise than beneficent. The Western farmer, when he first breaks up his prairie lands, finds his plough impeded at every step by the strong roots of wild grasses; but he knows that it was those grasses, growing up year after year

through centuries, that accumulated the rich loam in which he plants his corn.

The mental soil of China is composed of three leading elements, which have been commingled and brought into interaction in such a way as to present to the superficial observer a homogeneous aspect. These are the three religions,—Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist.

Let us find what elements Buddhism has contributed, to make it ready for the higher cultivation of our Christian epoch.

The fundamental requisites of all religious teaching are two, viz.:—

1.—A belief in God; i. e.,—in some effective method of divine government.

2.—A belief in the immortality of the soul; i. e.,—in a future state of being, whose condition is determined by our conduct in the present life.

These cardinal doctrines we find accepted everywhere in China. There are, it is true, those who deny them; but such are Confucianists, not Buddhists;—and I do not hesitate to affirm that, for the general prevalence of both, China is mainly indebted to the agency of Buddhism. When, in the first century of our era, its missionaries arrived from India, they found a Supreme God recognized in the books, but practically withdrawn from the homage of the masses, because he was considered as too exalted to be approached by anyone except the lord of the empire. The people took refuge in the worship of natural objects and of human heroes; not one of all their deities taking any strong hold on their affections, or entering deeply into their spiritual life.

In regard to the hope of a future existence, the state of things was not better. The worship of ancestors main-

tained a shadowy faith in something like ghosts, but it seldom amounted to a potent conviction. The absence of such a conviction showed itself in the eagerness with which men laid hold on the faint hope held out by Taoist alchemy,—that some medicine might be discovered which would vanquish death. The few enthusiasts seen on mountain tops, seeking for the *elixir vitae*, and stretching their hands and eyes towards heaven,—were they not rather touching proofs of a universal want, than evidences of any well-grounded faith?

It was in fact the deep consciousness of a want in both respects that rendered the introduction of Buddhism so easy. It found an “aching void” in the human heart, and it filled it with such materials as it possessed.

Instead of their materialistic conceptions, it raised the Chinese to a belief in the powers of a spiritual universe infinitely more grand than this visible world. In that universe, Buddhas and divinities of the next grade, called Bodisatwas, held sway, not limited to any hill or city, but extending to all places where their devout worshippers called for succor. Buddha, though in theory already passed into the blessedness of an unconscious Nirvana, was popularly held to be the actual lord of the universe. Bodisatwas were believed to have the forces of nature at command, and to be actively engaged in the work of blessing mankind.

The superiority of these Buddhist divinities over those which they displaced, consists chiefly in the fact that they possess a moral character. By virtue, they have risen in the scale of being in a progression, bounded only by that sublime height on which Buddha sits wrapped in solitary contemplation. Their human kindness rendered them attractive, and the most popular of all is the Goddess of Mercy. She holds in her arms an infant child, and



BUDDHIST MONUMENT

stretches a thousand hands to help the needy ; what wonder that she is the favorite object of Chinese devotion. She is called briefly *P'u Sa*, and, in most parts of the empire, that term is employed to express the idea of a vigilant and merciful Providence. Providence is also commonly ascribed to Buddha. The "blessing" and "protection" of Buddha are phrases in familiar use. In a set of verses, to which I shall have occasion to refer again, the abbot of a monastery in the Western Hills ascribes the fruits of the earth to the goodness of Buddha.*

The verses read :—

"The production of a grain of rice is as great a work as the creation of a mountain.

Had it not been for the power of Buddha, where should we have found our food?

If we sincerely remember how near to us is Buddha, then we may dare to accept the nourishment that heaven and earth afford."

Our present inquiry relates to Buddhism in China ; but it may not be out of place to indicate that a similar transformation of the original conception of Buddha has taken place in other countries, especially in those that belong to the Northern School. In Japan, Amitaba is endowed with the attributes of Preserver and Redeemer. In Mongolia, the same is true of Borhan (a name which I take to be derived from Buddha and Arhan) ; and missionary translators have not hesitated to accept it as a fitting expression for God, in the rendering of our Holy Scrip-

* The volume from which I copied these and other stanzas is in manuscript. It was lent me by the author.

tures. In Nepaul, Adi-Buddha is adored as the supreme and living god. A hymn, which I translate from the French* (which in turn is taken from an English translation of Hodgson), describes him thus:—

- 1.—“ In the beginning there was nothing ; all was emptiness,
and the five elements had no existence.
Then Adi-Buddha revealed himself under the form of
a flame of light.
- 2.—He is the great Buddha who exists of himself.
- 3.—All things that exist in the three worlds have their cause in
him ; he it is who sustains their being. From him, and
out of his profound meditation, the universe has sprung
into life.
- 4.—He is the combination of all perfections ; the infinite one,
who has neither bodily members nor passions !
All things are his image, yet he has no image.
- 5.—The delight of Adi-Buddha is to make happy all sentient
creatures.
He tenderly loves those who serve him ;
His majesty fills the heart with terror ;
He is the consoler of those who suffer.”

Who will deny that this is a noble psalm of praise ; that the sublime ascriptions which it contains are worthy to be laid as an offering at the feet of Jehovah ?

May we not say that a people who have derived these ideas from the teachings of Buddhism appear to be in a state of comparative readiness for the message of an apostle of the true faith, proclaiming—“ Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you ” ?

Let us see if the same kind of preparation is to be discovered in the notions entertained in regard to the soul.

In China, prior to the arrival of Buddhism, there existed on this subject, as we have said, a painful sense of deficiency.

* *Tour du Monde, Voyage au Nepal*, 1888.

Buddhism came as an evangel of hope, teaching that immortality is man's inalienable inheritance, and not the inheritance of man only, but of every sentient creature; that all are connected by the links of an endless chain, moving onward in unceasing procession, either on an ascending or descending scale; that the reality of the next stage of being is more certain than the existence of the material objects by which we are surrounded; that the soul is an immaterial essence, which the transformations of matter have no power to destroy; and finally, that the weal or woe of the future life depends on the conduct of each individual during this present state of probation.

How thoroughly this teaching has permeated the Chinese mind may be seen in the following passage from *Liu Yen Tsa Tse*, one of the most popular text-books employed in the schools of Peking. "The glory and happiness of the present life are fruits that spring from seeds planted in a former state. If the present life is hungry, cold, and bitter, the fountain of evil is to be traced to the sins of a former state of existence."

The materializing views of Taoism are condemned (to quote only one example) in the following verses from another book.*

"Ye who study the doctrine of Tao,
And strive to prepare the elixir of immortality,—
Do you not reflect that the elements of immortality are within
you?
Do you not know that the elixir of life is within you?
For soul and spirit, they are the root and fountain."

In the same book, there are verses which represent a princess (who became the goddess) as announcing her

* *Kuan Yin Ching*, a metrical biography of the goddess of mercy.

resolution to adopt a religious life, and with many tears exhorting her parents to do the same. She says:—

“ If a man live to a hundred years, his life is as a dream ;
Glory and wealth pass away like a flash of gunpowder.
I beg my father and mother to give themselves to works of
piety,
To worship Buddha, to read the holy books, and move the heart
of Heaven ;
To store up good works, to confirm your own virtues,
And escape from a sea of bitterness,—a world of dust and
turmoil.
Owing to your good deeds in a former state, you now possess
the sovereignty of hills and rivers.
If, standing on your present height, you still strive upward,
Praying the gods to write your names on the roll of the purple
mansion,
You may come to enjoy the blessedness of Heaven, and rise
above the estate of men.”

I do not, for my present purpose, go into the recondite lore of great libraries, but rather draw my proofs from manuals of the family and of the common school, in order to show what doctrines are actually in possession of the popular mind. That they teach the supreme importance of a life to come, there is no denying. Their best views are vitiated by mixture with the errors of metempsychosis. But is not this so far a preparation for receiving a better hope from Him who hath abolished death and “ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel? ”

Let us next inquire into its influence in bringing about those states of mind which are described as the Christian graces. For want of time, I refrain from going into an examination of the Buddhist decalogue, or in any other way entering into a general comparison of Buddhist and

Christian ethics. The side of ethics, with which we have to do at present, is that which looks heavenward; i. e.,—religion in its practical aspect.

Our Christian ethics, in their religious bearings, are beautifully summarized by "Faith, Hope, and Charity." Has Buddhism anything answering to these? If it has, it differs in that respect from all other pagan religions. In the old religions of Greece and Rome, the things signified were so utterly unknown that the three words acquired a new signification in passing into Christian use. As for the early religions of China, they have nothing to show under the rubrics of Faith, and Hope, though Charity was emphasized by Confucius. Is it not, then, claiming for Buddhism a great approximation to our divine system to assert that it possesses all three?

Faith keeps in view the realities of the unseen world, and supplies the place of sight and of reason too, to no small extent. The place assigned to it is, as with us, at the head of the list. In a publication by a learned priest of Ningpo, Faith is called "the mother of virtues."

Our abbot of the Western Hills gives it an equally exalted position; and, like St. James, he connects it with "works," as proof of its genuineness. He says:—"To be a Buddhist, faith has always been considered the first requisite; but faith without works is vain."

Can anything show more clearly than this antithesis that the word is employed in a sense identical with its Christian usage?

From this peculiar prominence of the grace of faith, it almost follows as a matter of course that the adherents of the faith should be called "believers." We are not, therefore, surprised to find the term *hsin shih*, "believers," in general use. *Shan nan hsin nü* "honest men and be-

lieving women," is a frequent phrase, which tells its own story as to the proportion of believers in the two sexes.

Hope is a grace which Buddhism makes prominent, without having a word for it. Of the emphasis it lays on the hope of immortality, I have already spoken in treating of that cardinal doctrine. The constant endeavour of a devout Buddhist, is to secure the rewards of the life to come by working and suffering in this present world? In Chinese Buddhism, that which kindles hope and quickens effort in the highest degree, is the prospect of entrance into the "happy land;" the "pure or sinless land;" the "paradise of the West?" This is the Buddhist's hope of heaven.

On the place of charity in the Buddhist scheme, I need not dilate. Love to being, in the broadest sense, is enjoined by precept; it was exemplified in the life of the founder, and it finds expression in every phase of Buddhist religious life. Compassion is the form which it chiefly takes. The loftier form of adoring love for divine perfection, as in our Christian system, is less frequent, but not wholly wanting. Is it not charity to men that our abbot expresses, when he says—"My desire is to pluck every creature that is endowed with feeling out of this sea of misery?" Is it not something very like love to God, when he says—"In your walks, meditate on Buddha; call to mind his refulgent person; at every step, pronounce his name, and beware that you deceive not your own heart?"

It follows, from what we have seen, that Buddhism must have made an immense addition to the religious vocabulary of the Chinese people. For the jargon of its Sanskrit prayers, and for a multitude of theological terms, imported bodily from India, I have no word of praise or

apology; but, within the domain of pure Chinese, it is safe to affirm that Buddhism has enriched the language, as it has enlarged the sphere of popular thought.

It has given the Chinese such ideas as they possess of heaven and hell; and of spiritual beings, rising in a hierarchy above man, or sinking in moral turpitude below man. It has given them all their familiar terms relating to sin, to good works, to faith, to repentance; and, most important of all, to a righteous retribution, which includes the awards of a future life.

Not one of these words or phrases conveys to the Chinese the exact idea required by the teachings of Christianity; yet the first teachers of Christianity, on coming to China, seized on these terms as so much material made ready to their hand, sprinkled them with holy water, and consecrated them to a new use. Matteo Ricci soon renounced the Buddhist garb; but no missionary, Papal or Protestant, has ever abandoned the Buddhist terminology.

Half the churches in Rome are built of stones taken from the temples of Paganism; and some of them, such as the Pantheon and the Ara Cœli, continue to be known by their old names. So half the doctrines of Christianity are introduced to the Chinese in a dress borrowed from Buddhism. It could not be otherwise; and this fact, taken alone, appears almost decisive in favor of the affirmative side of the question under discussion.

If the eloquent Saurin is right in asserting that God's purpose in bringing Judea under the domination of Greece was, by the introduction of the Greek language, to provide a more perfect vehicle for the revelations of the new dispensation, is it going too far to suggest that Buddhism has had a similar mission? Has it not, prepared a language for the communication of divine truth?

Has it not also prepared the mind of the people to receive it, by importing a stock of spiritual ideas, and by cultivating their spiritual sense?

But, however sympathetic may be our mental attitude in regard to it, we must admit that its mission is finished, and that, for the future, the highest service it can render will be to supply a native stock on which to graft the vine of Christ. By giving the Chinese an example of a foreign creed winning its way and holding its ground in spite of opposition, it has prepared them to expect a repetition of the phenomenon. As Buddhists (and though professing to be Confucians, they are nearly all more or less tinged with Buddhism) they are taught to believe that their present form of faith is not final, and to look for a fuller manifestation in an age of higher light. Will not this prepare them, when the tide sets in that direction, to accept Christianity as the fulfilment of their expectation? *

Sir Monier Williams states the negative features of the Buddhist creed in terms not less forcible and explicit. "Buddhism," he says, "has no creator, no creation, no original germ of all things, no soul of the world, no personal, no impersonal, no supermundane, no antemundane principle."

Of original and classic Buddhism, this is strictly true; and the defects of the root affect more or less all the branches. Still it is very instructive to remark how, in the Northern Buddhism with which I am dealing, man's

* Professor Rhys David in *Buddhism and Christianity* makes the following statement:

"In Buddhism, we have an ethical system, but no law-giver; a world without a creator, a salvation without eternal life, and a sense of evil, but no conception of pardon, atonement, reconciliation, or redemption."

religious instincts triumph over the obstacles created by an atheistic philosophy, so that Buddhism has become pre-eminentlly the religious discipline of Eastern Asia.*

* The assumption by Buddhism of a distinctly religious character is primarily due to the school of Mahayana, which Eitel describes as "a later form of the dogma,—one of the three phases of its development, characterized by an excess of transcendental speculation, and not known to Southern Buddhism."

The Buddhists of Japan are beginning to agitate the question whether the Mahayana rests in any degree on the authority of Sakyamuni.

How near the Reformed Buddhism of Japan approaches to Christianity will be apparent from the following printed statement given me by a priest, by whom it was drawn up:

"Our sect called *Shinshuu* 'True Doctrine' teaches the doctrine of help from another.

"Now what is this help from another? It is the great power of Amita Buddha. Amita means 'boundless.' Therefore Amita is the chief of the Buddhas. Our sect pays no attention to the other Buddhas, but putting faith in Amita expects to escape from this miserable world and to enter Paradise in the next life. From the time of putting faith in Buddha, we do not need any power of self-help—but need only to keep his mercy in heart, and invoke his name in order to remember him.

"We make no difference between priest and layman as concerns the way of salvation. The priest is allowed to marry and to eat flesh and fish—which is prohibited to the members of the other Buddhist sects."

XV

THE WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS IN CHINA

IN those early days when Moses was going to school to the priests of Memphis, and when Cecrops had not yet landed on the shores of Attica, the civilization of China was crystallized into permanent shape, and the national religion consisted of three elements: 1. The worship of Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler; 2. The worship of powers supposed to preside over the principal departments of material nature; and 3. The worship of deceased ancestors.

The earliest recorded instance of the latter dates back to a period anterior to the calling of Abraham; when Shun, the son of a blind peasant, was adopted into the family of the Emperor Yao and acknowledged as heir to the throne, 2300 B. C.

Of the ceremonial employed on this occasion, we have no details; the statement that the "concluding rites" were performed in the temple of Wên Tsu, the ancestor of Yao, is all that the historian has vouchsafed to communicate. Yet, how much is implied in this laconic record?

It implies, on the part of Yao, an announcement to the spirits of his forefathers of his purpose to effect a change in the line of succession. On the part of Shun, it implies a reverential acceptance of Yao's ancestors in place of his own, and the assumption in their presence of vows of fidelity in the discharge of his high functions.

When the Emperor now on the throne, was adopted by an Empress Regent as the son of his uncle Hsien Fêng, a similar ceremony was performed by proxy in the temple of the deceased sovereign. On that occasion, a fanatical censor, Wu K'o Tu, protested against the affiliation to Hsien Fêng; contended that it was doing dishonor to the last Emperor T'ung Chih, to leave him without a son; and, in order to give emphasis to his remonstrance, he sealed it with his blood, sacrificing his life before the tomb of the latter sovereign.

This occurrence, illustrating as it does what took place 4000 years ago, is of itself sufficient to prove that in the China of to-day the worship of ancestors is not a dead form, but a living faith.

Not only is the adoption of an heir to the throne thus formally announced to the ancestors of the reigning house; every case of regular succession is solemnly notified by a similar ceremonial.

In the 12th century before our era, Wu Wang overturned the house of Shang, and founded the dynasty of Chou. In the indictment which, to justify his rebellion, he brings against the degenerate occupant of the throne, he begins by charging him with neglecting the service of Shang Ti and subordinate deities, and even forgetting to sacrifice at the altars of his own ancestors.

In a second manifesto, he refers to his deceased father Wên Wang, and adds—"If I gain the victory, it will not be through my own prowess, but through the merits of my father. If I am beaten, it will not be from any fault in my father, but solely from the want of virtue in me."

He warns his soldiers that—"if they are brave, they will be rewarded publicly in the temple of his ancestors; but if cowardly, they will be slain at the altars of the earth-gods."

Such was the place held by the worship of ancestors at the dawn of history, along with that of Shang Ti and a host of inferior divinities. At the present day, no one can visit the magnificent monuments of the Ming Emperors, or witness the vast sums expended on the mausolea of the reigning House, without a profound conviction that the cult of ancestors has lost nothing of its ancient sanctity.

In 1889 the reigning Emperor and the Dowager Empress made a solemn pilgrimage to the tombs of their fathers; the former to report in person his marriage and full accession to imperial power, the latter to give account of her exercise of delegated authority during her long regency. What stronger proof could be required of the important position which the worship of ancestors still occupies in the religion of the State?

It is not, however, restricted to the ruling classes. It forms the leading element in the religion of the people.

It is, in fact, the only form of religion which the government takes the trouble to propagate among its subjects.

Every household has somewhere within its doors a small shrine, in which are deposited the tablets of ancestors, and of all deceased members of the family who have passed the age of infancy.

Each clan has its ancestral temple, which forms a rallying point for all who belong to the common stock. In such temples, as in the smaller shrines of the household, the objects of reverence are not images, but tablets,—slips of wood inscribed with the name of the deceased, together with the dates of birth and death. In these tablets, according to popular belief, dwell the spirits of the dead. Before them ascends the smoke of daily incense; and,

twice in the month, offerings of fruits and other eatables are presented, accompanied by solemn prostrations.

In some cases, particularly during a period of mourning, the members of the family salute the dead, morning and evening, as they do the living; and on special occasions, such as a marriage or a funeral, there are religious services of a more elaborate character, accompanied sometimes by feasts and theatrical shows.

Besides worship in presence of the representative tablet, periodical rites are performed at the family cemetery. In spring and autumn, when the mildness of the air is such as to invite excursions, city families are wont to choose a day for visiting the resting places of their dead. Clearing away the grass, and covering the tombs with a layer of fresh earth, they present offerings and perform acts of worship. This done, they pass the rest of the day in enjoying the scenery of the country.

RELATION TO THE SAN CHIAO, OR THREE RELIGIONS.

Such, in outline, is the system of ancestral worship. It constitutes the very heart of the religion of China. The Supreme Ruler is too august to be approached by ordinary mortals. As to other divinities, their worship is incumbent only on priests or magistrates; but the worship of ancestors is obligatory on all. They are the *penates* of every household. To honor them is religion; to neglect them the highest impiety.

Usages of this kind spring as naturally as the grass from the graves of the deceased; and in ancient times the funeral rites of the Chinese differed little from those of other nations. That by which they are justly distinguished is that, instead of suffering them to be over-

shadowed by polytheism, they alone have shaped their offices for the dead into an all-pervading and potent cult which moulds the social and spiritual life of every individual in the Empire.

Spontaneous in its origin, in its developed form it is the slow growth of thirty centuries. It was practised in the Golden Age of Chinese history, two thousand years before the Christian era ; and in the rites of Chou, a thousand years later, we find it reduced to a precise and complicated code ; but it was not so stereotyped as to be incapable of further alteration. It was disfigured by grotesque ceremonies, the reproduction of which at the present day would be regarded as hardly less shocking than the restoration of human sacrifices—I allude particularly to that curious arrangement by which a solemn act of religion was converted into a ridiculous masquerade—young children being made to personate their ancestors, and, habited in ghostly costume, receiving the homage of their own parents. Nor was it then clothed with the imperious authority which it now exercises. In the life of Confucius we find recorded the remarkable fact that when arrived at manhood he was ignorant of the burial-place of his father, who had died when he was an infant, and it was not until the death of his mother that he took pains to ascertain it. This indicates a degree of laxity which would not be possible at the present day, when semi-annual offerings are required to be made at the tombs of ancestors.

Yet it is to Confucius more than to any other man that China is indebted for the strictness with which the rites of this worship are now universally observed. Making filial piety the corner-stone of his ethical system, and only vaguely recognizing the personality of the supreme power, whom he styles *T'ien*, or Heaven, he was led to

seek in the worship of ancestors for the religious sanctions required to confirm it. "If," said he, "funeral rites are performed with scrupulous care, and remote ancestors duly recognized, the virtues of the people will be strengthened." This is a maxim which lies at the foundation of the religious polity of the Chinese Empire.

The more objectionable features in ancestral worship are not due to Confucius, and derive no sanction from his authority; I mean the transformation of the deceased into tutelar divinities; and the absurd doctrine that the destinies of the family are determined by the location of the family tombs.

The first of these springs so readily from the human heart that it is unnecessary to look for its origin in the teachings of any particular school. It is touching to read on a tombstone that a mourning family, having laid an aged parent in his last resting-place, beseech his spirit to hover over them as a protecting power. But the Chinese are not so taught by Confucius, who, when interrogated as to the survival of the soul, refused to assert that it possesses any conscious existence after the death of the body; and, while exhorting to sincerity in sacrifices, went no further than to say, "Sacrifice to the spirits *as if* they were present."

The other tenet is derived from *fêng-shui*, or geomancy, the debasing offshoot of a degenerate Taoism. This false science, which bears to geology a relation similar to that which astrology bears to astronomy, assumes the existence of certain influences connected with the configuration of the surface which affect the destinies of the inhabitants of any given locality. These must be taken account of in selecting the site of a dwelling-house, a school, a shop, or even a stable, and especially a burial-place. So strong is the conviction on this last point that families who are

overtaken by a series of misfortunes are often persuaded to exhume the bones of their forefathers, and shift them, perhaps more than once, to a new location, in hopes of hitting on the focus of auspicious influences. This superstition is even carried into the domain of politics; so that the government, on suppressing a rebellious *emeute*, has been known to order the destruction of the family tombs of the rebel chief, in order to strike at what is supposed to be the fountain-head of the disturbing influence.

Buddhism has exerted a profound influence on the worship of ancestors, strengthening, as it has done, the instinctive faith in a future state, and introducing an elaborate liturgy for the repose of the departed.

RELATION TO SOCIAL ORDER.

“In China filial piety is the bond of social order.”

The Imperial house sets the example in what it regards as the highest form of filial duty. Not only are separate shrines erected for the ancestors of the reigning family; the Emperor, according to immemorial usage, associates them with Shang Ti the Supreme Ruler, in the sacrifices which, as high-priest of the Empire, he makes at the Temple of Heaven.

The visitor who is fortunate enough to gain access to an azure-colored pagoda on the north of the principal altar may see there a tablet inscribed with the name of Shang Ti occupying the central place of honor, while the tablets of ten generations of the reigning family are ranged on the right and left. Three of these never set foot in China, nor in any proper sense can they be said to have occupied the Imperial throne.

Two of them reigned in Liaotung, over a single province, and one was the chief of a roving tribe in the wilds

of Manchuria; yet on the occupation of China by their descendants, they were all canonized or raised by Imperial decree to the dignity of Emperor.

This tendency of the stream of honor to flow upwards is peculiar to China. There alone is it possible for a distinguished son to lift his deceased parents out of obscurity, and to confer on their names the reflected lustre of his own rank.

It is not easy for us to estimate the force of the motive which is thus brought to bear on a generous mind nurtured under the influence of such traditions. *Kuang tsung yu tsu*, "Be careful to reflect glory on your forefathers," is a hortatory formula, addressed alike to the soldier on the battle-field and the student in the halls of learning.

If, as President Hayes asserted in a speech at San Francisco, "those who show the greatest respect for their ancestors are most likely to be distinguished by their regard for posterity," the Chinese ought to excel all men in that sentiment, so essential to the well-being of a State; certain it is that their worship of ancestors fosters the sentiment in a most effectual manner.

The man who worships his forefathers, and believes in their conscious existence, naturally desires to leave offspring who shall keep the fires burning on the family altar, and regale his own spirit with periodical oblations. Mencius accordingly lays it down as a maxim that "of the three offences against filial piety, the greatest is to be childless"—a dictum which has contributed not a little to promote the practice of early marriage, and the consequent enormous expansion of the population of China. Viewed in this latter aspect, the reflex influence of ancestral worship may be considered as a doubtful boon; but as to the underlying sentiment, were it wisely directed to

providing for the welfare of coming generations as well as to bringing them into existence, its beneficial effects would be of inestimable value.

The worship of ancestors strengthens the ties of kinship, and binds together those family and tribal groups on which the government so much relies for the control of its individual subjects. The family temple serves for a church, theatre, school-house, council-room, indeed for all the varied objects required by the exigencies of a village community. Domains attached to it for the maintenance of the sacrifices are held as common property; and glebe-lands are often appended which are devoted to the support of needy members of the widely extended connection. I have seen a town of twenty-five thousand people, all belonging to the same clan, and bearing the same family name. A conspicuous edifice near the centre bore the name of Shih Tsu Miao, i. e. temple of our first ancestor. Here the divergent branches of the family tree met in a common root; and all the citizens, under the cloud of incense arising from a common sacrifice, were led to feel the oneness of their origin; though separated, it might be, by half a millennium. Such a village resembles the growth of a banyan-tree—the most distant column in the living arcade, though resting on a root of its own, still maintains a vital connection with the parent stock.

The following are some of the occasions on which formal addresses are made to the spirits of ancestors. When a youth dons the cap of manhood, he is taken to the ancestral temple, where his father invokes for him the guardian care of his forefathers, "that he may be a complete man, and not fall below their standard of excellence." The rite is extremely impressive, and it would lose nothing of its solemnity, if, in lieu of the invocation of the dead, the blessing of the living God were invoked.

When a son or daughter is betrothed, the parents simply notify their ancestors, much as they do their living kindred, but without asking for tutelar care. When a youth goes to fetch home his bride, the father "reverentially announces the fact to his ancestors, with offerings of fruits and wine." The same is done in case of a bride departing for her new home.

In the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom presents his wife to his ancestors as a new member of the family, and invokes for her their "paternal blessing."

In none of the forms connected with funerals is there any petition for blessing or protection. The language is that of a simple announcement, accompanied by an expression of profound sorrow. But in the periodical services at the family cemetery, this objectionable element shows itself, the worshipper says—"We have come to sweep your tombs to show our gratitude for your protecting care, and now we beseech you to accept our offerings and make our posterity prosperous and happy." With the alteration of a few words, these so-called prayers might be reduced to mere expressions of natural affection. He who would object to them after such retrenchment, would condemn Cowper's pathetic address to his mother's picture?—

"My mother, when I knew that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?"

In *Hernani*, that noble tragedy of Victor Hugo, one of the most impressive scenes is an act of worship at the tomb of an ancestor.

Don Carlos, afterwards Charles V., on the eve of elec-

tion to the throne of the German Empire, enters the mausoleum of Charlemagne at Aix la Chapelle, and, throwing himself on his knees before the tomb of the great monarch, he pours out this prayer:—

“Pour into my heart something of thy own sublime spirit; speak, for thy son is waiting to hear. Thou dwellest in light; oh, send some rays upon his pathway.”

This, it may be said, is poetry, not religion; while the worship of the Chinese is religion, with very little poetry.

Aside from its social and economic relations, this form of worship exerts a religious and moral influence beyond any other system of doctrines hitherto known to the Chinese Empire. In a sceptical world, and through ages not favored with that revelation which has “brought life and immortality to light,” it has kept alive the faith in a future life. The orthodox son of Han regards himself as living and acting in the sight of his ancestors. He refers his conduct to their supposed judgment, and the comfort of his dying hour is largely determined by the view he takes of the kind of welcome he is likely to receive when he meets the shades of his forefathers.

“How could I look my ancestors in the face if I should consent to such a proposition?” is a reply which many an officer has given to a temptation to betray his trust. A motive which has such power to deter from baseness may also be potent as a stimulus to good; indeed, in respect to moral efficacy it would appear to be only second to that of faith in the presence of an all-seeing Deity. How effective it must be may be inferred from the fact that a Chinese, bent on wounding his adversary in the keenest point, curses, not the obnoxious individual, but his ancestors; because respect for them is the deepest of all his religious sentiments.



THE IMPERIAL ANCESTRAL TEMPLE

RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY.

In conclusion, the spectacle of a great nation with its whole population gathered round the altars of their ancestors, tracing their lineage up to the hundredth generation, and recognizing the ties of kindred to the hundredth degree, is one that partakes of the sublime. It suggests, moreover, two questions of no little interest: 1. May there not be some feature in the Chinese system which we might with advantage engraft on our Western civilization? 2. In propagating Christianity in China, what attitude ought missionaries to assume towards that venerable institution?

If it be objected that a sufficient answer to both is found in the tendency of ancestral worship to fetter progress by pledging men to the imitation of the past, we reply that such an effect is by no means necessary; that Chinese conservatism is due to other causes, and that men of the present generation may gratefully acknowledge their obligations to the past, while conscious that they themselves constitute the highest stage in the skyward column of our growing humanity. The *Vrilya*, we are told in the instructive romance of Lord Lytton "the Coming Race", with all their advanced ideas, still preserved with reverence the portraits of their early ancestors who had not yet attained the human shape.

The question of adopting such an institution is quite distinct from that of uprooting it from a soil in which it has been prolific of blessings. Is it merely one of the many phases of pagan religion, which, however they may have subserved the cause of morality in a twilight age, must be regarded as purely obstructive in the light of Christian day, or may we not recognize in it some element of permanent good, worthy to survive all changes

in the national faith? As a matter of fact, all missionary bodies have taken the former view—except those Jesuits who first introduced Christianity to the Chinese people. Perceiving unmistakable evidence that filial reverence had grown into idolatrous devotion, and memorial tablets become converted into objects of idolatrous homage, they have declared war against the entire system.

It is, I confess, a suspicious circumstance to find the Jesuits tolerating the traditional rites, while Dominican and Franciscan, Greek and Protestant, have all concurred in rejecting them. Yet I cannot bring myself to feel that the latter have been wholly right, or the former altogether wrong. Had the policy of the Jesuits been sanctioned by the Popes, the adherents of the Church of Rome might have been spared a century of persecution, and it is probable that the religion of India might have been supplanted by that of Europe; for nothing has ever aroused such active opposition to Christianity as the discovery that it stands in irreconcilable antagonism to the worship of ancestors. The decision of the Sovereign Pontiff committing his Church to this position reminds us by its effects of the unfortunate reply of a Saxon missionary to Radbod, the King of Friesland. The King, with one foot in the baptismal font, as a last question, asked the missionary whether he must think of his ancestors as in heaven or in hell. "In hell," was the reply. "Then I shall go with my fathers," exclaimed the King, as he drew back and refused the Christian rite. Thousands of Chinese on the brink of a Christian profession have been held back by a similar motive.

The question, I admit, is not altogether one of expediency. Yet, in view of all our obligations to truth and righteousness, there appears to me to be no necessity for placing them in this cruel dilemma. The idolatrous ele-

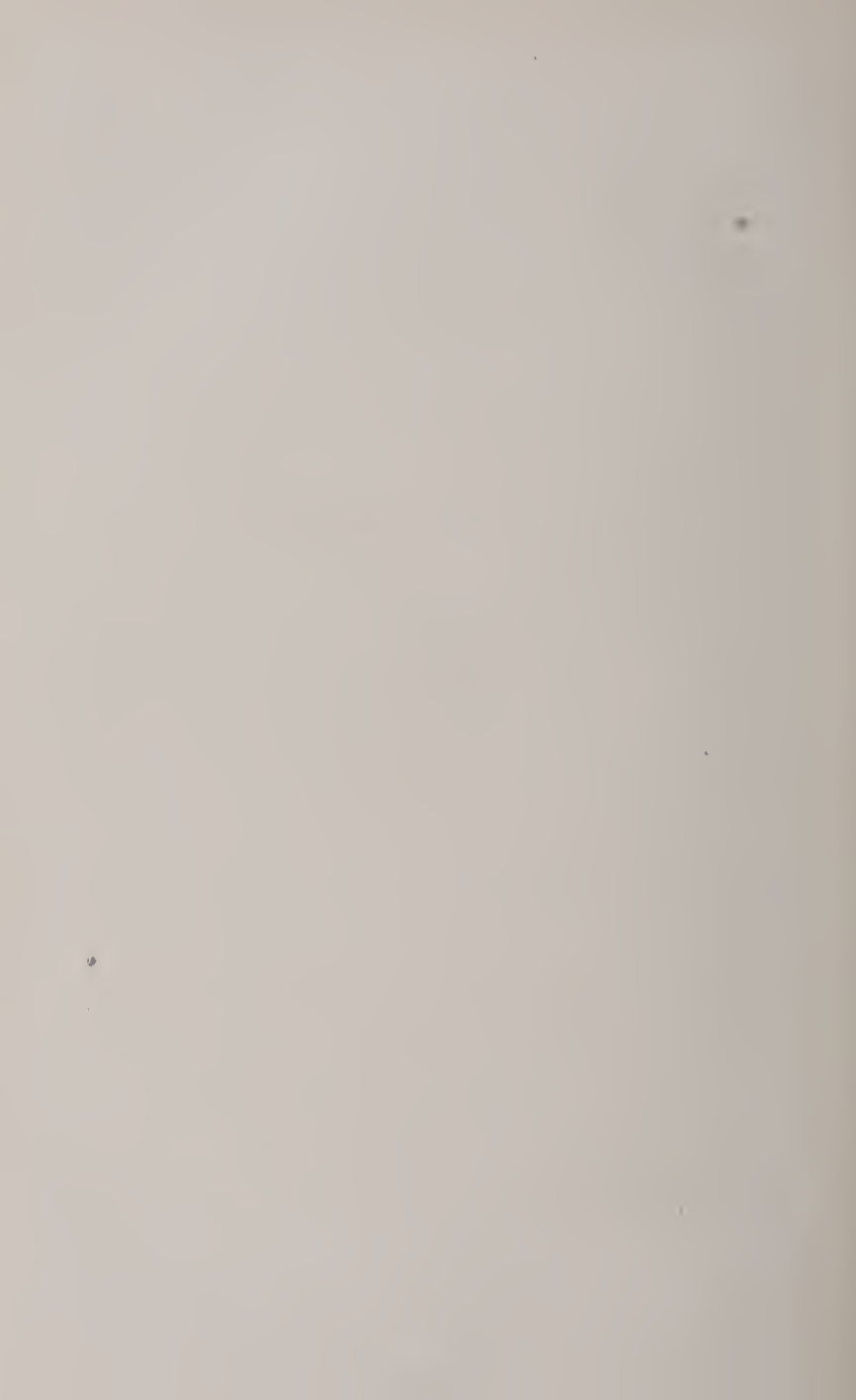
ments involved in ancestral worship are, as we have seen, excrescences, not of the essence of the system. Why not prune them off and retain all that is good and beautiful in the institution? A tablet inscribed with a name and a date is in itself a simple memorial not more dangerous than the urns of ashes which cremationists are supposed to preserve in their dwellings, and not half so much so as pictures and statues; why should the native convert be required to surrender or destroy it? The semi-annual visit to the family cemetery is a becoming act of respect to the dead: why should that be forbidden? As to offerings of meats and drinks, why should they—or why should they not,—be replaced by bouquets of flowers, or the periodical planting of flower-seeds and flowering shrubs? Even the act of prostration before the tomb or tablet can hardly be regarded as objectionable in a country where children are required to kneel before their living parents. Two things excite my poignant grief when I look back to the mistakes of the past—one, the exclusion of a church member for complying with the ordinary marriage ceremony and kneeling before a strip of paper inscribed with the five objects of veneration, the other insisting on the surrender of ancestral tablets as a proof of sincerity on the part of an applicant for baptism. I had no right to impose such a test in either case.

That which is really objectionable is geomancy and the invocation of departed spirits. The simplest ideas of science are sufficient to dispel the one form of superstition, and a very small amount of religious knowledge supplies an effectual antidote to the other. The worship of ancestors would thus be restored to the state in which Confucius left it, or rather to that in which he himself practised it—as merely a system of commemorative rites.

Whatever party takes this position will have an im-

mense advantage in the competition for converts. Missionaries may never accept it. But the native Church cannot be expected to follow servilely in the footsteps of its foreign leaders. When the higher classes come to embrace Christianity in great numbers, they will readily leave behind them their Buddhism and their Taoism; but the worship of ancestors they will never consent to abandon, though they may submit to some such modifications as those which I have endeavored to indicate.

BOOK IV
Education in China



XV*

SCHOOL AND FAMILY TRAINING

I. Influence on national character

THE interest of the inquiry on which we are about to enter is based on the assumption that differences of national character are mainly due to the influence of education. This we conceive to be true, except in extreme cases, such as those of the inhabitants of torrid or frigid regions, where everything succumbs to the tyranny of physical forces. In such situations climate shapes education, as, according to Montesquieu, it determines morals and dictates laws. But in milder latitudes the difference of physical surroundings is an

* This chapter was first published in 1877 as a pamphlet, by the United States Bureau of Education. The following letter of the late Mr. Avery, United States Minister to China, may serve to explain its origin:

"To the Commissioner of Education:

"SIR,—Before my departure for China, I received from you a request to secure for use by your Bureau an accurate and full statement of the methods of education in China, and 'the relation of the methods to the failure of their civilization.'

"On my arrival at Peking, bearing your request in mind, I was confirmed in the opinion entertained before, that to no one else could I apply for the information desired with so much propriety as to Dr. W. A. P. Martin, our fellow-countryman, president of the Imperial College for Western Science at Peking, whose long residence in China, scholarly knowledge of

almost inappreciable element in the formation of character in comparison with influences of an intellectual and moral kind. Much, for example, is said about the inspiration of mountain scenery—an inspiration felt most sensibly, if not most effectively, by those who see the mountains least frequently; but, as John Foster remarks, the character of a lad brought up at the foot of the Alps is a thousandfold more affected by the companions with whom he associates than by the mountains that rear their heads above his dwelling.

The peculiar character of the Chinese—for they have a character which is one and distinct—is not to be accounted for by their residence in great plains, for half the empire is mountainous. Neither is it to be ascribed to their rice diet, as rice is a luxury in which few of the northern population are able to indulge. Still less is it to be referred to the influence of climate, for they spread over a broad belt in their own country, emigrate in all directions, and flourish in every zone. It is not even explained by the unity and persistency of an original type, for in their earlier career they absorbed and assimilated several other races, while history shows that at different epochs their own character has undergone remarkable

Chinese literature, and familiar acquaintance with native methods of education must be well known to you.

“Dr. Martin, at my solicitation, agreed to furnish a paper on the subject you indicated, which I have just received from his hands, and now forward to you through the courtesy of the State Department. I scarcely need add that you will find it alike interesting and valuable.

“I am, sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“BENJ. P. AVERY.

“HON. JOHN EATON,
“*Commissioner of Education.*”

changes. The true secret of this phenomenon is the presence of an agency which, under our own eyes, has shown itself sufficiently powerful to transform the turbulent nomadic Manchu into the most Chinese of the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom. The general name for that agency, which includes a thousand elements, is education. It is education that has imparted a uniform stamp to the Chinese under every variety of physical condition; just as the successive sheets of paper applied to an engraving bring away, substantially, the same impression, notwithstanding differences in the quality of the material.

In this wide sense we shall not attempt to treat the subject, though it may not be out of place to remark that the Chinese themselves employ a word which answers to education with a similar latitude. They say, for instance, that the education of a child begins before its birth. The women of ancient times, say they, in every movement had regard to its effect on the character of their offspring. This they denominate *chiao*, reminding us of what Gœthe tells us in his autobiography of certain antecedents which had their effect in imparting to him

“That concord of harmonious powers
Which forms the soul of happiness.”

All this, whatever its value, belongs to physical discipline. We shall not go so far back in the history of our typical Chinese, but, confining ourselves strictly to the department of intellectual influences, take him at the time when the young idea first begins to shoot, and trace him through the several stages of his development until he emerges a full-fledged Academician.*

* For an account of the Imperial Hanlin Academy, see chapter III.

II. Home education

With us the family is the first school. Not only is it here that we make the most important of our linguistic acquirements, but with parents who are themselves cultivated there is generally a persistent effort to stimulate the mental growth of their offspring, to develop reason, form taste, and invigorate the memory.

In many instances parental vanity applies a spur where the curb ought to be employed, and a sickly precocity is the result; but in general a judicious stimulus addressed to the mind is no detriment to the body, and it is doubtless to the difference of domestic training rather than to race that we are to ascribe the early awaking of the mental powers of European children as compared with those of China. The Chinese have, it is true, their stories of infant precocity—their Barretiers and Chattertons. They tell of Li Mu, who, at the age of seven, was thought worthy of the degree of *Chin Shih*, or the literary doctorate, and of *Hsie Chin*, the “divine child,” who, at the age of ten, composed a volume of poems, still in use as a juvenile text-book. But these are not merely exceptions; they are exceptions of rarer occurrence than among us.

Chinese children do not get their hands and feet as soon as ours, because, in the first months of their existence, they are tightly swathed and afterwards overloaded with cumbrous garments. The reason for their tardier mental development is quite analogous. European children exhibit more thought at five than Chinese children at twice that age. This is not a partial judgment, nor is the fact to be accounted for by a difference of race; for in mental capacity the Chinese are, in my opinion, not inferior to the “most favored nation.” Deprive our nurseries of those speaking pictures that say so much to

the infant eye; of infant poems, such as those of Watts and Barbauld; of the sweet music that impresses those poems on the infant mind; more than all, take away those Bible stories and scraps of history which excite a thirst for the books that contain them, and what a check upon mental growth, what a deduction from the happiness of childhood! With us the dawn of knowledge precedes the use of books, as the rays of morning, refracted by the atmosphere and glowing with rosy hues, anticipate the rising of the sun. In China there is no such accommodating medium, no such blushing aurora. The language of the fireside is not the language of the books.

Mothers and nurses are not taught to read; nor are fathers less inclined than with us to leave the work of instruction to be begun by the professional teacher. This they are the more disposed to do, as an ancient usage* prohibits a parent being the instructor of his own children; still some fathers, yielding to better instincts, do take a pride in teaching their infant sons; and some mothers, whose exceptional culture makes them shine like stars in the night of female ignorance, have imparted to their children the first impulse in a literary career.

How many of those who have obtained seats on the literary Olympus were favored with such early advantages it is impossible to ascertain. That the number is considerable, we cannot doubt. We remember hearing of two scholars in Chêkiang who were not only taught the mechanical art of writing, but the higher art of composition, by an educated mother, both of them winning the honors of the Academy.

As another instance of the same kind, the *Memoirs of the Academy* embalm the memory of such a noble mother along with the name of her illustrious son; and the

* "They exchanged their sons for education," says an old book.

Emperor Ch'ien Lung, with vermilion pencil, celebrates the talents of the one and the virtues of the other.

The Emperor says of Chien Chên Chên, "He drew his learning from a hidden source, a virtuous mother imparting to him her classic lore." In the prose obituary prefixed to the verses, his Majesty says, "Chien's mother, Lady Chên, was skilled in ornamental writing. In his boyhood it was she who inspired and directed his studies. He had a painting which represented his mother holding a distaff and at the same time explaining to him the classic page. I admired it, and inscribed on it a complimentary verse"—A graceful tribute from an exalted hand, worth more, in the estimation of the Chinese, than all the marble or granite that might be heaped upon her sepulchre.

III. Commencement of school life

In general, however, a Chinese home is not a hot-bed for the development of mind. Nature is left to take her own time, and the child vegetates until he completes his seventh or eighth year. The almanac is then consulted, and a lucky day chosen for inducting the lad into a life of study. Clad in festal robe, with tasselled cap, and looking a mandarin in small, he sets out for the village school, his face beaming with the happy assurance that all the stars are shedding kindly influence, and his friends predicting that he will end his career in the Imperial Academy. On entering the room, he performs two acts of worship: the first is to prostrate himself before a picture of the Great Sage, who is venerated as the fountain of wisdom, but is not supposed to exercise over his votaries anything like a tutelar supervision. The second is to salute with the same forms, and almost equal

reverence, the teacher who is to guide his inexperienced feet in the pathway to knowledge. In no country is the office of teacher more revered. Not only is the living instructor saluted with forms of profoundest respect, but the very name of teacher, taken in the abstract, is an object of almost idolatrous homage. On certain occasions it is inscribed on a tablet in connection with the characters for heaven, earth, prince, and parents, as one of the five chief objects of veneration, and worshipped with solemn rites. This is a relic of the primitive period, when books were few and the student dependent for everything on the oral teaching of his sapient master. In those days, in Eastern as well as Western Asia and Greece, schools were peripatetic, or (as Jeremy Taylor says of the Church in his time) *ambulatory*. Disciples were wont to attend their master by day and night, and follow him on his peregrinations from State to State, in order to catch and treasure up his most casual discourses.

As to the pursuit of knowledge, they were at a great disadvantage compared with modern students, whose libraries contain books by the thousand, while their living teachers are counted by the score. Yet the student life of those days was not without its compensating circumstances. Practical morality, the formation of character, was the great object, intellectual discipline being deemed subordinate; and in such a state of society physical culture was, of course, not neglected. The personal character of the teacher made a profound impression on his pupils, inspiring them with ardor in the pursuit of virtue; while the necessity of learning by question and answer excited a spirit of inquiry and favored originality of thought. But now all this is changed, and the names and forms continue without the reality.

A man who never had a dozen thoughts in all his life

sits in the seat of the philosophers and receives with solemn ceremony the homage of his disciples. And why not? For every step in the process of teaching is fixed by unalterable usage. So much is this the case that in describing one school I describe all, and in tracing the steps of one student I point out the course of all; for in China there are no new methods or short roads.

In other countries, a teacher, even in the primary course, finds room for tact and originality. In those who dislike study a love of it is to be inspired by making "knowledge pleasant to the taste," and the dull apprehension is to be awakened by striking and apt illustrations; while, to the eager and industrious, "steps to Parnassus" are, if not made easy, at least to be pointed out so clearly that they shall waste no strength in climbing by wrong paths. In China there is nothing of the kind. The land of uniformity, all processes in arts and letters are as much fixed by universal custom as is the cut of their garments or the mode of wearing their hair. The pupils all tread the path trodden by their ancestors of a thousand years ago, nor has it grown smoother by the attrition of so many feet.

IV. Stages of study

The undergraduate course may be divided into three stages, in each of which there are two leading studies:

In the first, the occupations of the student are committing to memory (not reading) the canonical books and writing an infinitude of diversely formed characters as a manual exercise.

In the second, they are the translation of his text-books (i. e. reading), and lessons in composition.

In the third, they are belles-lettres and the composition of essays.

Nothing could be more dreary than the labors of the first stage. The pupil comes to school, as one of his books tells him, "a rough gem, that requires grinding;" but the process is slow and painful. His books are in a dead language, for in every part of the Empire the style of literary composition is so far removed from that of the vernacular speech that books, when read aloud, are unintelligible even to the ear of the educated, and the sounds of their characters convey absolutely no meaning to the mind of a beginner. Nor, as a general thing, is any effort made to give them life by imparting glimpses of their signification. The whole of this first stage is a dead lift of memory, unalleviated by the exercise of any other faculty. It is something like what we should have in our Western schools if our youth were restricted to the study of Latin as their sole occupation, and required to stow away in their memory the contents of the principal classics before learning a word of their meaning.

The whole of the Four Books and the greater part of the Five Classics are usually gone through in this manner, four or five years being allotted to the cheerless task. During all this time the mind has not been enriched by a single idea. To get words at the tongue's end and characters at the pencil's point is the sole object of this initial discipline. It would seem, indeed, as if the wise ancients who devised it had dreaded nothing so much as early development, and, like prudent horticulturists, resorted to this method for the purpose of heaping snow and ice around the roots of the young plant to guard against its premature blossoming. All the arrangements

of the system are admirably adapted to form a safeguard against precocity. Even the stimulus of companionship in study is usually denied, the advantages resulting from the formation of classes being as little appreciated as those of other labor-saving machinery. Each pupil reads and writes alone, the penalty for failure being so many blows with the ferule or kneeling for so many minutes on the rough brick pavement which serves for a floor.

At this period fear is the strongest motive addressed to the mind of the scholar; nor is it easy to say how large a share this stern discipline has in giving him his first lesson in political duty—viz., that of unquestioning submission—and in rendering him cringing and pliant towards official superiors. Those sallies of innocent humor and venial mischief so common in Western schools are rarely witnessed in China.

A practical joke in which the scholars indulged at the expense of their teacher I have seen represented in a picture, but never in real life. This picture, the most graphic I ever saw from a Chinese pencil, adorns the walls of a monastery at the Western Hills, near Peking. It represents a village school, the master asleep in his chair and the pupils playing various pranks, the least of which, if the tyrant should happen to awake, would bring down his terrible baton. But, notwithstanding the danger to which they expose themselves, two of the young unterrified stand behind the throne, threatening to awake the sleeper by tickling his ear with the tail of a scorpion.

So foreign, indeed, is this scene to the habits of Chinese schoolboys that I feel compelled to take it in a mystic rather than a literal signification. The master is reason, the boys are the passions, and the scorpion conscience. If passion gets at the ear of the soul while

reason sleeps, the stings of conscience are sure to follow—those

“Pangs that pay joy's spendthrift thrill
With bitter usury.”

Thus understood, it conveys a moral alike worthy of Christian or Buddhist ethics.

Severity is accounted the first virtue in a pedagogue; and its opposite is not kindness, but negligence. In family schools, where the teacher is well watched, he is reasonably diligent and sufficiently severe to satisfy the most exacting of his patrons. In others, and particularly in charity-schools, the portrait of Squeers in Nicholas Nickleby would be no caricature. With modifications and improvements in the curriculum, a teacher has nothing to do. His business is to keep the mill going, and the time-honored argument *a posteriori* is the only persuasion he cares to appeal to.

This arctic winter of monotonous toil once passed, a more auspicious season dawns on the youthful understanding. The key of the Cabala which he has been so long and so blindly acquiring is put into his hands. He is initiated in the translation and exposition of those sacred books which he had previously stored away in his memory, as if apprehensive lest another tyrant of Chin might attempt their destruction. The light, however, is let in but sparingly, as it were, through chinks and rifts in the long dark passage. A simple character here and there is explained, and then, it may be after the lapse of a year or two, the teacher proceeds to the explication of entire sentences. Now for the first time the mind of the student begins to take in the thoughts of those he has been taught to regard as the oracles of wisdom. His dormant faculties wake into sudden life, and, as it would

seem, unfold the more rapidly in consequence of their protracted hibernation. To him it is like

“ The glorious hour when spring goes forth
O’er the bleak mountains of the shadowy north,
And with one radiant glance, one magic breath,
Wakes all things lovely from the sleep of death.”

The value of this exercise can hardly be overestimated. When judiciously employed, it does for the Chinese what translation into and out of the dead languages of the West does for us. It calls into play memory, judgment, taste, and gives him a command of his own vernacular which, it is safe to assert, he would never acquire in any other way. Yet even here I am not able to bestow unqualified commendation. This portion of the course is rendered too easy; as much too easy as the preceding is too difficult. Instead of requiring a lad, dictionary in hand, to quarry out the meaning of his author, the teacher reads the lesson for him, and demands of him nothing more than a faithful reproduction of that which he has received; memory again, sheer memory! Desirable as this method might be for beginners, when continued, as the Chinese do, through the whole course, it has the inevitable effect of impairing independence of judgment and fertility of invention—qualities for which Chinese scholars are by no means remarkable, and for the deficiency of which they are, no doubt, indebted to this error of schoolroom discipline.

Simultaneously with a translation the student is initiated in the art of composition—an art which, in any language, yields to nothing but practice. In Chinese it is beset with difficulties of a peculiar kind. In the majority of cultivated languages the syntax is governed by rules, while inflections, like mortise and tenon, facilitate the structure of the sentence.

Not so in this most primitive form of human speech. Verbs and nouns are undistinguished by any difference of form, the verb having no voice, mood, or tense, and the noun neither gender, number, nor case. Collocation is everything; it creates the parts of speech and determines the signification of characters. The very simplicity of the linguistic structure thus proves a source of difficulty, preventing the formation of any such systems of grammatical rules as abound in most inflected languages, and throwing the burden of acquisition on the imitative faculty; the problem being, not the erection of a fabric from parts which are adjusted and marked, but the building of an arch with cobble-stones.

If these uniform, unclassified atoms were indifferent to position, the labor of arrangement would be nothing, and style impossible. But most of them appear to be endowed with a kind of mysterious polarity which controls their collocation, and renders them incapable of companionship except with certain characters, the choice of which would seem to be altogether arbitrary. The origin of this peculiarity is not difficult to discover. In this, as in other things among the Chinese, usage has become law. Combinations which were accidental or optional with the model writers of antiquity, and even their errors, have, to their imitative posterity, become the *jus et norma loquendi*. Free to move upon each other when the language was young and in a fluid state, its elements have now become crystallized into invariable forms. To master this pre-established harmony without the aid of rules is the fruit of practice and the labor of years.

The first step in composition is the yoking together of double characters. The second is the reduplication of these binary compounds and the construction of parallels—an idea which runs so completely through the whole of

Chinese literature that the mind of the student requires to be imbued with it at the very outset. This is the way he begins: The teacher writes "Wind blows," the pupil adds "Rain falls;" the teacher writes "Rivers are long," the pupil adds "Seas are deep" or "Mountains are high," etc.

From the simple subject and predicate, which in their rude grammar they describe as "dead" and "living" characters, the teacher conducts his pupil to more complex forms, in which qualifying words and phrases are introduced. He gives as a model some such phrase as "The Emperor's grace is vast as heaven and earth," and the lad matches it by "The sovereign's favor is profound as lake and sea." These couplets often contain two propositions in each member, accompanied by all the usual modifying terms; and so exact is the symmetry required by the rules of the art that not only must noun, verb, adjective, and particle respond to each other with scrupulous exactness, but the very tones of the characters are adjusted to each other with the precision of music.

Begun with the first strokes of his untaught pencil, the student, whatever his proficiency, never gets beyond the construction of parallels. When he becomes a member of the Institute or a minister of the Imperial Cabinet, at classic festivals and social entertainments, the composition of impromptu couplets, formed on the old model, constitutes a favorite pastime. Reflecting a poetic image from every syllable, or concealing the keen point of a cutting epigram, they afford a fine vehicle for sallies of wit; and poetical contests such as that of Melibæus and Menalcas are in China matters of daily occurrence. If a present is to be given, on the occasion of a marriage, a birthday, or any other remarkable occasion, nothing

is deemed so elegant or acceptable as a pair of scrolls inscribed with a complimentary distich.

When the novice is sufficiently exercised in the "parallels" for the idea of symmetry to have become an instinct, he is permitted to advance to other species of composition which afford freer scope for his faculties. Such are the *shou t'ieh* in which a single thought is expanded in simple language; the *lun*, the formal discussion of a subject more or less extended, and epistles addressed to imaginary persons and adapted to all conceivable circumstances. In these last, the forms of the "complete letter-writer" are copied with too much servility; but in the other two, substance being deemed of more consequence than form, the new-fledged thought is permitted to essay its powers and to expatiate with but little restraint.

In the third stage, composition is the leading object, reading being wholly subsidiary. It takes, for the most part, the artificial form of verse, and of a kind of prose called *wên chang*, which is, if possible, still more artificial. The reading required embraces mainly rhetorical models and sundry anthologies. History is studied, but only that of China, and that only in compends; not for its lessons of wisdom, but for the sake of the allusions with which it enables a writer to embellish classic essays. The same may be said of other studies; knowledge and mental discipline are at a discount, and style at a premium. The goal of the long course, the flower and fruit of the whole system, is the *wên chang*; for this alone can insure success in the public examinations for the civil service, in which students begin to adventure soon after entering on the third stage of their preparatory course.

These examinations we reserve for subsequent consid-

eration, and in that connection we shall notice the *wên chang* more at length. We may, however, remark in passing that to propose such an end as the permanent object of pursuit must of necessity have the effect of rendering education superficial. In our own universities surface is aimed at rather than depth; but what, we may ask, besides an empty glitter, would remain if none of our students aspired to anything better than to become popular newspaper-writers? Yet successful essayists and penny-a-liners require as a preparation for their functions a substratum of solid information. They have to exert themselves to keep abreast of an age in which great facts and great thoughts vibrate instantaneously throughout a hemisphere. But the idea of progressive knowledge is alien to the nature of the *wên chang*. A juster parallel for the intense and fruitless concentration of energy on this species of composition is the passion for Latin verse which was dominant in our halls of learning until dethroned by the rise of modern science.

V. Grade of schools

The division of the undergraduate course into the three stages which we have described gives rise to three classes of schools; the primary, in which little is attended to beyond memoriter recitation and imitative chirography; the middle, in which the canonical books are expounded; and the classical, in which composition is the leading exercise. Not unfrequently all three departments are embraced in one and the same school; and still more frequently the single department professed is so neglected as to render it utterly abortive for any useful purpose. This, as we have elsewhere intimated, is particularly the case with what are called public schools.

National schools there are none, with the exception of those at the capital for the education of the Bannermen, originally established on a liberal scale, but now so neglected that they can scarcely be reckoned among existing institutions.

A further exception may be made in favor of schools opened in various places by provincial officers for special purposes; but it is still true that China has nothing approaching to a system of common schools designed to diffuse among the masses the blessings of a popular education. Indeed, education is systematically left to private enterprise and public charity; the government contenting itself with gathering the choicest fruits and encouraging production by suitable rewards. A government that does this cannot be accused of neglecting the interests of education, though the beneficial influence of such patronage seldom penetrates to the lower strata of society.

Even higher institutions, those that bear the name of colleges, are, for the most part, left to shift for themselves on the same principle. Such colleges differ little from schools of the middle and higher class, except in the number of professors and students. The professors, however numerous, teach nothing but the Chinese language, and the students, however long they may remain in the institution, study nothing but the Chinese language. Colleges in the modern sense, as institutions in which the several sciences are taught by men who are specially expert, are, as yet, almost unknown. But there is reason to believe that the government will soon perceive the necessity of supplying its people with the means of a higher, broader culture than they can derive from the grammar and rhetoric of their own language.

In establishing and contributing to the support of

schools, the gentry are exceedingly liberal; but they are not always careful to see that their schools are conducted in an efficient manner. In China nothing flourishes without the stimulus of private interest. Accordingly, all who can afford to do so, endeavour to employ private instructors for their own families; and where a single family is unable to meet the expense, two or three of the same clan or family name are accustomed to club together for that object.

Efforts for the promotion of education are specially encouraged by enlightened magistrates. Recently, over three hundred new schools were reported as opened in one department of the Province of Canton as the result of official influence, but not at government expense. The Emperor, too, has a way of bringing his influence to bear on this object without drawing a farthing from his exchequer. I shall mention three instances by way of illustration.

Last year, in Shantung, a man of literary standing contributed four acres of ground for the establishment of a village school. The governor recommended him to the notice of the Emperor, and his Majesty conferred on him the titular rank of professor in the Kuo Tze Chien, or Confucian College.

Three or four years ago, in the Province of Hupei, a retired officer of the grade of Taotai, or Intendant of Circuit, contributed twenty thousand taels for the endowment of a college at Wu Chang. The Viceroy Li Han Chang reporting to the throne this act of munificence, the Chinese Peabody was rewarded by the privilege of wearing a red button instead of a blue one, and inscribing on his card the title of Provincial Judge.

The third instance is that of a college in Kei Lin Fu, the capital of Kuangsi. Falling into decay and ruin

during the long years of the Taiping rebellion, the gentry, on the return of peace, raised contributions, repaired the building, and started it again in successful operation. The governor solicits on behalf of these public-spirited citizens some marks of the Imperial approbation; and his Majesty sends them a laudatory inscription written by the elegant pencils of the Hanlin.

But private effort, however stimulated, is utterly inadequate to the wants of the public. In Western countries the enormous exertions of religious societies, prompted as they are by pious zeal enhanced by sectarian rivalry, have always fallen short of the educational necessities of the masses. It is well understood that no system of schools can ever succeed in reaching all classes of the people unless it has its roots in the national revenue.

In China, what with the unavoidable limitation of private effort and the deplorable inefficiency of charity-schools, but a small fraction of the youth have the advantages of the most elementary education brought within their reach.

I do not here speak of the almost total absence of schools for girls, for against these, Chinese are principled. The government, having no demand for the services of women in official posts, makes no provision for their education; and popular opinion regards reading and writing as dangerous arts in female hands. If a woman, however, by chance, emerging from the shaded hemisphere to which social prejudices have consigned her (*si qua fata aspera rumpat*), vindicates for herself a position among historians, poets, or scholars, she never fails to be greeted with even more than her proper share of public admiration. Such instances induce indulgent fathers now and then to cultivate the talents of a clever daughter, and occasionally neighborhood schools for the

benefit of girls are to be met with ; but the Chinese people have yet to learn that the best provision they could make for the primary education of their sons would be to educate the mothers, and that the education of the mothers could not fail to improve the intellectual character of their offspring. But even for the more favored sex the facilities for obtaining an education are sadly deficient ; only a small percentage of the youth attend school, and, owing to the absurd method which we have described, few of them advance far enough to be initiated into the mysteries of ideography.

On this subject a false impression has gone abroad. We hear it asserted that "education is universal in China ; even coolies are taught to read and write." In one sense this is true, but not as we understand the terms "reading and writing." In the alphabetical vernaculars of the West the ability to read and write implies the ability to express one's thoughts by the pen, and to grasp the thoughts of others when so expressed. In Chinese, and especially in the classical or book language, it implies nothing of the sort. A shopkeeper may be able to write the numbers and keep accounts without being able to write anything else ; and a lad who has attended school for several years will pronounce the characters of an ordinary book with faultless precision, yet not comprehend the meaning of a single sentence. Of those who can read understandingly (and nothing else ought to be called reading), the proportion is greater in towns than in rural districts. But striking an average, it does not, according to my observation, exceed one in twenty for the male sex and one in ten thousand for the female—rather a humiliating exhibit for a country which has maintained for centuries such a magnificent institution as the Hanlin Academy.

With all due allowance for the want of statistical accuracy where no statistics are obtainable, compare this with the educational statistics of the United States as given in the census of 1870. Taking the country as a whole, the ratio of illiteracy among persons over ten years of age is 1 in 6; taking the Northern States alone, the ratio is 57 to 1,000, or about 1 in 18.*

VI. Government agency

To some it may be a matter of surprise that popular education is left to take care of itself in a country where letters are held sacred and their inventor enrolled among the gods; to others it may appear equally strange that mental cultivation is so extensively diffused, considering the cumbrous vehicle employed for the transmission of thought and the enormous difficulty of getting command of it. Both phenomena find their solution in the fact that the government does not value education for its own sake, but regards it as means to an end. The great end is the repose of the State; the instruments for securing it are able officers, and education is the means for preparing them for the discharge of their duties. This done, an adequate supply of disciplined agents once secured, the education of the people ceases to be an object. The repose of the State, one of the ancient philosophers tells us, might be assured by the opposite process: "Fill the people's bellies and empty their minds; cause that they neither know nor desire anything, and you have the secret of a tranquil government." Such is the advice of Laotze, which I am inclined to take as an utterance of Socratic irony rather than Machiavelian malice. So far from subscribing to this sentiment in its literal import, the Chinese government holds its officers responsible for

* Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1871.

the instruction of its subjects in all matters of duty; and in Chinese society the idea of instruction as the one thing needful has so wrought itself into the forms of speech as to become a wearisome cant. The red card that invites you to an entertainment solicits "instruction." When a friend meets you he apologizes for having so long absented himself from your "instructions;" and in familiar conversation, simple statements and opinions are often received as "precious instruction" by those who do not by any means accept them. It is more to the point to add that one of the classical books denounces it as the greatest of parental faults to bring up a child without instruction. This relates to the moral rather than to the intellectual side of education. The Chinese government does, nevertheless, encourage purely intellectual culture; and it does so in a most decided and effectual manner—viz., by testing attainments and rewarding exertion. In the magnificence of the scale on which it does this, it is unapproached by any other nation of the earth.

Lord Mahon, in his *History of England*, speaking of the patronage extended to learning in the period preceding Walpole, observes that "though the sovereign was never an Augustus, the minister was always a Mæcenas. Newton became Master of the Mint; Locke was Commissioner of Appeals; Steele was Commissioner of Stamps; Stepney, Prior, and Gray were employed in lucrative and important embassies; Addison was Secretary of State; Tickell, Secretary in Ireland. Several rich sinecures were bestowed on Congreve and Rowe, on Hughes and Ambrose Philips." And he goes on to show how the illiberality of succeeding reigns was atoned for by popular favor, the diffusion of knowledge enabling the people to become the patron of genius and learning.

The Chinese practise none of these three methods. The Emperor, less arbitrary than monarchs of the West, does not feel at liberty to reward an author by official appointments, and his minister has no power to do so. The inefficiency of popular patronage is less to their credit; authors reap much honor and little emolument from their works. It is something to be able to add that all three are merged in a regulated State patronage, according to which the reward of literary merit is a law of the Empire and a right of the people. This brings us to speak of the examination system.*

Though not unknown to the Occidental public, these examinations are not properly understood, for the opinion has been gaining ground that their value has been over-rated, and that they are to be held responsible for all the shortcomings of Chinese intellectual culture. The truth is just the reverse. These shortcomings (I have not attempted to disguise them) are referable to other causes, while for nearly a thousand years this system of literary competition has operated as a stimulating and conservative agency, to which are due not only the merits of the national education, such as it is, but its very existence.

Coming down from the past, with the accretions of many centuries, it has expanded into a vast branch of the administration, and its machinery has become as complex as its proportions are enormous. Its ramifications extend to every district of the Empire; and it commands the services of district magistrates, prefects, and other civil functionaries up to governors and viceroys. These are all auxiliary to the regular officers of the literary corporation.

In each district there are two resident examiners with

*The subject is here touched on incidentally. For a fuller treatment of it see the next two chapters.

the title of professor, whose duty it is to keep a register of all competing students, and to exercise them from time to time in order to stimulate their efforts and keep them in preparation for the higher examinations in which degrees are conferred. In each province there is one chancellor or superintendent of instruction, who holds office for three years, and is required to visit every district and hold the customary examinations within that time, conferring the first degree on a certain percentage of the candidates. There are, moreover, two special examiners for each province, generally members of the Hanlin, deputed from the capital to conduct the great triennial examinations and confer the second degree.

The regular degrees are three:

First, *Hsiu-ts'ai*, or "Flower of talent."

Second, *Chü-jên*, or "Promoted scholar."

Third, *Chin-shih*, or "Fit for office."

To which may be added as a fourth degree the *Han-lin*, or member of the "Forest of Pencils." The first of these is sometimes compared to the degree of B.A., conferred by colleges and universities; the second to M.A.; the third to D.C.L. or LL.D. The last is accurately described by membership in the Imperial Academy; always bearing in mind how much a Chinese Academy must differ from a similar institution in the West. But so faint is the analogy which the other degrees bear to the literary degrees of Western lands that the interchange of terms is sure to lead to misconceptions. Chinese degrees represent talent, not knowledge; they are conferred by the State, without the intervention of school or college; they carry with them the privileges of official rank; and they are bestowed on no more than a very small percentage of those who engage in competition. With us, on the contrary, they give no official standing; they attest, where

they mean anything, acquirements rather than ability; and the number of those who are "plucked" is usually small in comparison with those who are allowed to "pass." But, after all, the new-fledged bachelor of an Occidental college, his head crammed with the outlines of universal knowledge, answers quite as nearly to the sprightly *hsiu-ts'ai*,

"Whose soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or Milky Way,"

as does a Western general to the chief of an undisciplined horde of so-called soldiers.

The following report of Pan Sze Lien, Chancellor of the Province of Shantung, though somewhat vague, will give us an idea of the official duties of the chief examiner and the spirit in which he professes to discharge them:

"Your Majesty's servant," says the chancellor, "has guarded the seal of office with the utmost vigilance. In every instance where frauds were detected, he has handed the offender over to the proper authorities for punishment. In re-examining the successful, whenever their handwriting disagreed with that of their previous performances, he has at once expelled them from the hall, without granting a particle of indulgence. He everywhere exhorted the students to aim at the cultivation of a high moral character. In judging of the merit of compositions, he followed reason and the established rules. At the close of each examination he addressed the students face to face, exhorting them not to walk in ways of vanity, nor to concern themselves with things foreign to their vocation, but to uphold the credit of scholarship and to seek to maintain or retrieve the literary reputation of their several districts. Besides these occupations,

your servant, in passing from place to place, observed that the snow has everywhere exercised a reviving influence; the young wheat is beginning to shoot up; the people are perfectly quiet and well disposed; the price of provisions is moderate; and those who suffered from the recent floods are gradually returning to their forsaken homes. For literary culture, Hsin Chou stands pre-eminent, while Tsao Chou is equally so in military matters."

This is the whole report, with the exception of certain stereotyped phrases, employed to open and conclude such documents, and a barren catalogue of places and dates. It contains no statistical facts, no statement of the number of candidates, nor the proportion passed; indeed, no information of any kind, except that conveyed in a chance allusion in the closing sentence.

From this we learn that the chancellor is held responsible for examinations in the military art; and it might be inferred that he reviews the troops and gauges the attainments of the cadets in military history, engineering, tactics, etc.; but nothing of the kind: he sees them draw the bow, hurl the discus, and go through various manœuvres with spear and shield, which have no longer a place in civilized warfare.

The first degree only is conferred by the provincial chancellor, and the happy recipients, fifteen or twenty in each department, or one per cent. of the candidates, are decorated with the insignia of rank and admitted to the ground-floor of the nine-storied pagoda. The trial for the second degree is held in the capital of each province, by special commissioners, once in three years. It consists of three sessions of three days each, making nine days of almost continuous exertion—a strain to the mental and physical powers to which the infirm and aged frequently succumb.

In addition to composition in prose and verse, the candidate is required to show his acquaintance with history (the history of China), philosophy, criticism, and various branches of archæology. Again one per cent. are decorated; but it is not until the more fortunate among them succeed in passing the metropolitan triennial that the meed of civil office is certainly bestowed. They are not, however, assigned to their respective offices until they have gone through two special examinations within the palace and in the presence of the Emperor. On this occasion the highest on the list is honored with the title of *chuang-yuan*, or "laureate"—a distinction so great that our Western curriculum has nothing to compare with it. In the late reign it was not thought unbecoming for the daughter of a *chuang-yuan* to be consort of the Son of Heaven.

A score of the best admitted to membership in the Academy, two or three score are attached to it as pupils or probationers, and the rest drafted off to official posts in the capital or in the provinces, the humblest of which is supposed to compensate the occupant for a life of penury and toil.

In conclusion, the civil-service competitive system appears destined to play a conspicuous part in carrying forward an intellectual movement the incipient stages of which are already visible. It has cherished the national education, such as it is; and if it has compelled the mind of China for ages past to grind in the mill of blind imitation, that is not the fault of the system, but its abuse.

When the growing influence of Western science animates it with a new spirit, as it must ere long, we shall see a million or more of patient students applying themselves to scientific studies with all the ardor that now characterizes their literary competition.

XVII

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS

THE reform proposed in the organization of our civil service, which contemplates the introduction of a system of competitive examinations, makes an inquiry into the experience of other nations timely. England, France, and Prussia have each made use of competitive examinations in some branches of their public service. In all these States the result has been uniform—a conviction that such a system, so far as it can be employed, affords the best method of ascertaining the qualifications of candidates for government employment. But in these countries the experiment is of recent date and of limited application. We must look farther East if we would see the system working on a scale sufficiently large and through a period sufficiently extended to afford us a full exhibition of its advantages and defects.

It is in China that its merits have been tested in the most satisfactory manner; and if in this instance we should profit by their experience, it would not be the first lesson we have learned from the Chinese, nor the last they are capable of giving us. It is to them that we are indebted, among other obligations, for the mariner's compass, for gunpowder, and probably also for a remote suggestion of the art of printing. These arts have been of the first importance in their bearing on the advancement of society—one of them having effected a

complete revolution in the character of modern warfare, while the others have imparted a mighty impulse to intellectual culture and commercial enterprise. Nor is it too much to affirm that, if we should adopt the Chinese method of testing the ability of candidates, and of selecting the best men for the service of the State, the change it would effect in our civil administration would be not less beneficial than those that have been brought about by the discoveries in the arts to which I have referred.

The bare suggestion may perhaps provoke a smile; but are not the long duration of the Chinese government, and the vast population to which it has served to secure a fair measure of prosperity, phenomena that challenge admiration? Why should it be considered derogatory to our civilization to copy an institution which is confessedly the masterpiece in that skilful mechanism—the balance-wheel that regulates the working of that wonderful machinery?

In the arts which we have borrowed from the Chinese we have not been servile imitators. In every case we have made improvements that astonish the original inventors. We employ movable type, apply steam and electricity to printing, use the needle as a guide over seas which no junk would have ventured to traverse, and construct artillery such as the inventors of gunpowder never dreamed of. Would it be otherwise with a transplanted competitive system? Should we not be able to purge it of certain defects which adhere to it in China, and so render it productive of better results than it yields in its native climate? I think, therefore, that I shall serve a better purpose than the simple gratification of curiosity if I devote a brief space to the consideration of the most admirable institution of the Chinese Empire.

Its primary object was to provide men of ability for

the service of the State, and, whatever else it may have failed to accomplish, it is impossible to deny that it has fulfilled its specific end in a remarkable degree. The mandarins of China are almost without exception the choicest specimens of the educated classes. Alike in the capital and in the provinces, it is the mandarins that take the lead in every kind of literary enterprise. It is to them the Emperor looks to instruct as well as to govern his people; and it is to them that the publishers look for additions to the literature of the nation—nineteenths of the new books being written by mandarins. In their social meetings, their conversation abounds in classical allusions; and instead of after-dinner speeches, they are accustomed to amuse themselves with the composition of impromptu verses, which they throw off with incredible facility. It is their duty to encourage the efforts of students, to preside at the public examinations, and to visit the public schools—to promote, in short, by example as well as precept, the interests of education. Scarcely anything is deemed a deeper disgrace than for a magistrate to be found incompetent for this department of his official duties. So identified, indeed, are the mandarins with all that constitutes the intellectual life of the Chinese people that foreigners have come to regard them as a favored caste, like the Brahmins of India, or as a distinct order enjoying a monopoly of learning, like the priesthood in Egypt.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Those stately officials, for whom the people make way with such awe-struck deference, as they pass along the street with embroidered robes and imposing retinue, are not possessors of hereditary rank, neither do they owe their elevation to the favor of their sovereign, nor yet to the suffrages of their fellow-subjects. They are self-elected, and the

people regard them with the deeper respect, because they know that they have earned their position by intellectual effort. What can be more truly democratic than (in the words of Anson Burlingame) to offer to all "the inspiration of fair opportunity?" In this genuine democracy China stands unapproached among the nations of the earth; for, whatever imperfections may attach to her social organization or to her political system, it must be acknowledged that she has devised the most effectual method for encouraging effort and rewarding merit. Here at least is one country where wealth is not allowed to raise its possessor to the seat of power; where the will even of an emperor cannot bestow its offices on uneducated favorites; and where the caprice of the multitude is not permitted to confer the honors of the State on incompetent demagogues.

The institution that accomplishes these results is not an innovation on the traditional policy of the Empire. It runs back in its essential features to the earliest period of recorded history. The adherence of the Chinese to it through so many ages well illustrates the conservative element in the national character; while the important changes it has undergone prove that this people is not by any means so fettered by tradition as to be incapable of welcoming improvements.

The germ from which it sprang was a maxim of the ancient sages, expressed in four syllables—*Chü hsien jên neng*—"Employ the able and promote the worthy;" and examinations were resorted to as affording the best test of ability and worth. Of the Great Shun, that model emperor of remote antiquity, who lived about B.C. 2200, it is recorded that he examined his officers every third year, and after these examinations either gave them promotion or dismissed them from the service. On what

subjects he examined them at a time when letters were but newly invented, and when books had as yet no existence, we are not told; neither are we informed whether he subjected candidates to any test previous to appointment; yet the mere fact of such a periodical examination established a precedent which has continued to be observed to the present day. Every third year the government holds a great examination for the trial of candidates, and every fifth year makes a formal inquisition into the record of its civil functionaries. The latter is a poor substitute for the ordeal of public criticism to which officials are exposed in a country enjoying a free press; but the former, as we shall have occasion to show, is thorough of its kind, and severely impartial.

More than a thousand years after the above date, at the commencement of the Chou dynasty, B. C. 1115, the government was accustomed to examine candidates as well as officers; and this time we are not left in doubt as to the nature of the examination. The Chinese had become a cultivated people, and we are informed that all candidates for office were required to give proof of their acquaintance with the five arts—music, archery, horsemanship, writing, and arithmetic; and to be thoroughly versed in the rites and ceremonies of public and social life—an accomplishment that ranked as a sixth art. These “six arts,” expressed in the concise formula *li, yüeh, shê, yü, shu, su*, comprehended the sum total of a liberal education at the period, and remind us of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of the mediæval schools.

Under the dynasty of Han, after the lapse of another thousand years, we find the range of subjects for the civil-service examinations largely extended. The Confucian Ethics had become current, and a moral standard was regarded in the selection of the competitors—District mag-

istrates were required to send up to the capital such men as had acquired a reputation for *hsiao* and *lien*—"filial piety" and "integrity"—the Chinese rightly considering that the faithful performance of domestic and social duties is the best guarantee for fidelity in public life. These *hsiao-lien*, "filial sons and honest subjects," whose moral character had been sufficiently attested, were now subjected to trial in respect to their intellectual qualifications. The trial was twofold—first, as to their skill in the "six arts" already mentioned; secondly, as to their familiarity with one or more of the following subjects: the civil law, military affairs, agriculture, the administration of the revenue, and the geography of the Empire with special reference to the state of the water communications. This was an immense advance on the meagre requirements of the more ancient dynasties.

Passing over another thousand years, we come to the era of the T'angs and the Sungs, when we find the standard of literary attainment greatly elevated, the graduates arranged in three classes, and officials in nine—a classification which is still retained.

Arriving at the close of the fourth millennium, under the sway of the Mings and of the Ch'ings of the present day, we find the simple trials instituted by Shun expanded into a colossal system, which may well claim to be the growth of four thousand years. It still exhibits the features that were prominent in its earlier stages—the "six arts," the "five studies," and the "three degrees" remaining as records of its progressive development. But the "six arts" are not what they once were; and the admirers of antiquity complain that examinations are sadly superficial as compared with those of the olden time, when competitors were required to ride a race, to shoot at a target, and to sing songs of their own com-

position to the accompaniment of their own guitars. In these degenerate days examiners are satisfied with odes in praise of music, and essays on the archery and horsemanship of the ancients.

Scholarship is a very different thing now from what it was in those ruder ages, when books were few, and the harp, the bow, and the saddle divided the student's time with the oral instructions of some famous master. Each century has added to the weight of his burden; and to the "heir of all the ages" each passing generation has bequeathed a legacy of toil. Doomed to live among the deposits of a buried world, and contending with millions of competitors, he can hardly hope for success without devoting himself to a life of unrelenting study. True, he is not called upon to extend his researches beyond the limits of his own national literature; but that is all but infinite. It costs him at the outset years of labor to get possession of the key that unlocks it; for the learned language is totally distinct from his vernacular dialect, and justly regarded as the most difficult of the languages of man. Then he must commit to memory the whole circle of the recognized classics, and make himself familiar with the best writers of every age of a country which is no less prolific in books than in men. No doubt his course of study is too purely literary and too exclusively Chinese, but it is not superficial. In a popular "Student's Guide" we lately met with a course of reading drawn up for thirty years! We proposed putting it into the hands of a young American residing in China, who had asked advice as to what he should read. "Send it," he replied, "but don't tell my mother."

But it is time to take a closer view of these examinations as they are actually conducted. The candidates



THE WATCH TOWER IN EXAMINATION GROUNDS



FURNACE FOR BURNING PAPER IN EXAMINATION GROUNDS

for office—those who are acknowledged as such in consequence of sustaining the initial trial—are divided into the three grades of *hsiu-ts'ai*, *chü-jen*, and *chin-shih*—“flowers of talent,” “promoted scholars,” and those who are “ready for office.” The trials for the first are held in the chief city of each district or *hsien*, a territorial division which corresponds to our county or to an English shire. They are conducted by a chancellor, whose jurisdiction extends over an entire province containing, it may be, sixty or seventy such districts, each of which he is required to visit once a year, and each of which is provided with a resident sub-chancellor, whose duty it is to examine the scholars in the interval, and to have them in readiness on the chancellor’s arrival.

About two thousand competitors enter the lists, ranging in age from the precocious youth just entering his teens up to the venerable grandsire of seventy winters. Shut up for a night and a day, each in his narrow cell, they produce each a poem and one or two essays on themes assigned by the chancellor, and then return to their homes to await the bulletin announcing their place in the scale of merit. The chancellor, assisted by his clerks, occupies several days in sifting the heap of manuscripts, from which he picks out some twenty or more that are distinguished by beauty of penmanship and grace of diction. The authors of these are honored with the degree of “Flower of Talent,” and are entitled to wear the decorations of the lowest grade in the corporation of mandarins.

The successful student wins no purse of gold and obtains no office, but he has gained a prize which he deems a sufficient compensation for years of patient toil. He is the best of a hundred scholars, exempted from liability

to corporal punishment, and raised above the vulgar herd. The social consideration to which he is now entitled makes it a grand day for him and his family.

Once in three years these "Flowers of Talent," these picked men of the districts, repair to the provincial capital to engage in competition for the second degree—that of *Chü Jên*, or "Promoted Scholar." The number of competitors amounts to ten thousand, more or less, and of these only one in every hundred can be admitted to the coveted degree. The trial is conducted by special examiners sent down from Peking; and this examination takes a wider range than the preceding. No fewer than three sessions of nearly three days each are occupied, instead of the single day for the first degree. Compositions in prose and verse are required, and themes are assigned with a special view to testing the extent of reading and depth of scholarship of the candidates. Penmanship is left out of the account—each production, marked with a cipher, being copied by an official scribe, that the examiners may have no clew to its author and no temptation to render a biassed judgment.

The victor still receives neither office nor emolument; but the honor he achieves is scarcely less than that which was won by the victors in the Olympic games. Again, he is one of a hundred, each of whom was a picked man; and as a result of this second victory he goes forth an acknowledged superior among ten thousand contending scholars. He adorns his cap with the gilded button of a higher grade, erects a pair of lofty flag-staves before the gate of his family residence, and places a tablet over his door to inform those who pass by that this is the abode of a literary prize-man. But our "Promoted Scholar" is not yet a mandarin in the proper sense of the term. The distinction already attained only stimulates his de-

sire for higher honors—honors which bring at last the solid recompense of an income—travelling at the expense of the state.

In the spring of the following year he proceeds to Peking to seek the next higher degree, attainment of which will prove a passport to office. The contest is still with his peers; that is, with other "Promoted Scholars," who, like himself, have come up from all the provinces of the empire. But the chances are this time more in his favor, as the number of prizes is now tripled; and if the gods are propitious his fortune is made.

Though ordinarily not very devout, he now shows himself peculiarly solicitous to secure the favor of the divinities. He burns incense and gives alms. If he sees a fish floundering on the hook, he pays its price and restores it to its native element. He picks struggling ants out of the rivulet made by a recent shower, distributes moral tracts, or, better still, rescues chance bits of printed paper from being trodden in the mire of the streets.* If his name appears among the favored few, he not only wins himself a place in the front ranks of the lettered, but he plants his foot securely on the rounds of the official ladder by which, without the prestige of birth or the support of friends, it is possible to rise to a seat in the Grand Council of State or a place in the Imperial Cabinet. All this advancement presents itself in the distant prospect, while the office upon which he immediately enters is one of respectability, and it may be of profit. It is generally that of mayor or sub-mayor of a district city, or sub-chancellor in the district examinations—the vacant posts being distributed by lot, and therefore impar-

* The bearing of good works of this kind on the result of the competition is copiously illustrated by collections of anecdotes which are widely circulated.

tially, among those who have proved themselves to be "ready for office."

Before the drawing of lots, however, for the post of a magistrate among the people, our ambitious student has a chance of winning the more distinguished honor of a place in the Imperial Academy. With this view, the two or three hundred survivors of so many contests appear in the palace, where themes are assigned them by the Emperor himself, and the highest honor is paid to the pursuit of letters by the exercises being presided over by his Majesty in person. Penmanship reappears as an element in determining the result, and a score or more of those whose style is the most finished, whose scholarship the ripest, and whose handwriting the most elegant, are drafted into the college of Hanlin, the "forest of pencils," a kind of Imperial Institute the members of which are recognized as standing at the head of the literary profession. These are constituted poets and historians to the Celestial Court, or deputed to act as chancellors and examiners in the several provinces.*

But the diminishing series in this ascending scale has not yet reached its final term. The long succession of contests culminates in the designation by the Emperor of some individual whom he regards as the *Chuang Yuan*, or Model Scholar of the Empire—the bright consummate flower of the season. This is not a common annual like the senior wranglership of Cambridge, nor the product of a private garden like the valedictory orator of our American colleges. It blooms but once in three years, and the whole Empire yields but a single blossom—a blossom that is culled by the hand of Majesty and esteemed among the brightest ornaments of his dominion.

* For details concerning the Hanlin Yuan, see the next chapter.

Talk of academic honors such as are bestowed by Western nations in comparison with those which this Oriental Empire heaps on her scholar laureate! Provinces contend for the shining prize, and the town that gives the victor birth becomes noted forever. Swift heralds bear the tidings of his triumph, and the hearts of the people leap at their approach. We have seen them enter a humble cottage, and amidst the flaunting of banners and the blare of trumpets announce to its startled inmates that one of their relations had been crowned by the Emperor as the laureate of the year. So high was the estimation in which the people held the success of their fellow-townsmen that his wife was requested to visit the six gates of the city, and to scatter before each a handful of rice, that the whole population might share in the good-fortune of her household. A popular tale, represents a goddess as descending from heaven, that she might give birth to the scholar laureate of the Empire. So exalted is this dignity that in 1872 the daughter of a *Chuang Yuan* was deemed sufficiently noble to be chosen for Empress Consort.

All this has, we confess, an air of Oriental display and exaggeration. It suggests rather the dust and sweat of the great national games of antiquity than the mental toil and intellectual triumphs of the modern world. But it is obvious that a competition which excites so profoundly the interest of a whole nation must be productive of very decided results. That it leads to the selection of the best talent for the service of the public we have already seen; but beyond this—its primary object—it exercises a profound influence upon the education of the people and the stability of the government. It is all, in fact, that China has to show in the way of an educational system. She has few colleges and no universities in our

Western sense,* and no national system of common-schools; yet it may be confidently asserted that China gives to learning a more effective patronage than she could have done if each of her emperors had been an Augustus and every premier a Mæcenas. She says to all her sons, "Prosecute your studies by such means as you may be able to command, whether in public or in private; and, when you are prepared, present yourselves in the examination-hall. The government will judge of your proficiency and reward your attainments."

Nothing can exceed the ardor which this standing offer infuses into the minds of all who have the remotest prospect of sharing in the prizes. They study not merely while they have teachers to incite them to diligence, but continue their studies with unabated zeal long after they have left the schools; they study in solitude and poverty; they study amidst the cares of a family and the turmoil of business; and the shining goal is kept steadily in view until the eye grows dim with age. Some of the aspirants impose on themselves the task of writing a fresh essay every day; and they do not hesitate to enter the lists as often as the public examinations recur, resolved, if they fail, to continue trying, believing that perseverance has power to command success, and encouraged by the legend of the man who, needing a sewing needle, made one by grinding a crow-bar on a piece of granite.

We have met an old mandarin who related with evident pride how, on gaining the second degree, he had removed with his whole family to Peking, from the distant province of Yünnan, to compete for the third; and

* This was written prior to the opening of the New University at Peking; and the North University at Tientsin—both closed suddenly, but not hopelessly, by the Boxer uprising.

how at each triennial contest he had failed, until, after more than twenty years of patient waiting, at the seventh trial, and at the mature age of threescore he bore off the coveted prize. He had worn his honors for seven years, and was then mayor of the city of Tientsin. In a list now on our table of ninety-nine successful competitors for the second degree, sixteen are over forty years of age, one sixty-two, and one eighty-three. The average age of the whole number is above thirty; and for the third degree the average is of course proportionally higher.

So powerful are the motives addressed to them that the whole body of scholars who once enter the examination-hall are devoted to study as a life-long occupation. We thus have a class of men, numbering in the aggregate some two or three millions, who keep their faculties bright by constant exercise, and whom it would be difficult to parallel in any Western country for readiness with the pen and retentiveness of memory. If these men are not highly educated, it is the fault not of the competitive system, which proves its power to stimulate them to such prodigious exertions, but of the false standard of intellectual merit established in China. In that country letters are everything and science nothing. Men occupy themselves with words rather than with things; and the powers of acquisition are more cultivated than those of invention.

The type of Chinese education is not that of our modern schools; but when compared with the old curriculum of languages and philosophy it appears by no means contemptible. A single paper, intended for the last day of the examination for the second degree, may serve as a specimen. It covers five subjects—criticism, history, agriculture, military affairs, and finance. There are

about twenty questions on each subject, and while they certainly do not deal with it in a scientific manner, it is something in their favor to say that they are such as cannot be answered without an extensive course of reading in Chinese literature. One question under each of the five heads is all that our space will allow us to introduce.

1. "How do the rival schools of Wang and Ching differ in respect to the exposition of the meaning and the criticism of the text of the 'Book of Changes'?"

2. "The great historian Sze Ma Ch'ien prides himself on having gathered up much material that was neglected by other writers. What are the sources from which he derived his information?"

3. "From the earliest times great attention has been given to the improvement of agriculture. Will you indicate the arrangements adopted for that purpose by the several dynasties?"

4. "The art of war arose under Huang Ti, forty-four hundred years ago. Different dynasties have since that time adopted different regulations in regard to the use of militia or standing armies, the mode of raising supplies for the army, etc. Can you state these briefly?"

5. "Give an account of the circulating medium under different dynasties, and state how the currency of the Sung dynasty corresponded with our use of paper money at the present day."

In another paper, issued on a similar occasion, astronomy takes the place of agriculture; but the questions are confined to such allusions to the subject as are to be met with in the circle of their classical literature, and afford but little scope for the display of scientific attainments. Still, the fact that a place is found for this

class of subjects is full of hope. It indicates that the door, if not fully open, is at least sufficiently ajar to admit the introduction of our Western sciences with all their progeny of arts, a band powerful enough to lift the Chinese out of the mists of their mediæval scholasticism, and to bring them into the full light of modern knowledge. If the examiners were scientific men, and if scientific subjects were made sufficiently prominent in these higher examinations, millions of aspiring students would soon become as earnest in the pursuit of modern science as they now are in the study of their ancient classics.* Thus reformed and renovated by the injection of fresh blood into the old arteries, this noble institution would be worthy of its dignity as a great national university—a university, not like those of Oxford and Cambridge, which train their own graduates, but—to compare great things with small—like the University of London, promoting the cause of learning by examining candidates and conferring degrees. The University of London admits to its initial examination annually about fourteen hundred candidates, and passes one half. The government examinations of China admit

* As a sample of the practical bearing which it is possible to give to these examination exercises, we take a few questions from another paper:

“Fire-arms began with the use of rockets in the Chou dynasty (B. C. 1122-256); in what book do we first meet with the word for cannon? What is the difference in the two classes of engines to which it is applied (applied also to the catapult)? Is the defence of K'ai Fêng Fu its first recorded use? Kublai Khan, it is said, obtained cannon of a new kind; from whom did he obtain them? The Sungs had several varieties of small cannon, what were their advantages? When the Mings, in the reign of Yung Lo, invaded Cochin-China, they obtained a kind of cannon called the ‘weapons of the gods;’ can you give an account of their origin?”

about two million candidates every year, and pass only two or three per cent.

The political bearings of this competitive system are too important to be passed over, and yet too numerous to be treated in detail. Its incidental advantages may be comprehended under three heads.

1. It serves the State as a safety-valve, providing a career for those ambitious spirits who might otherwise foment disturbances or excite revolutions. While in democratic countries the ambitious flatter the people, and in monarchies fawn on the great, in China, instead of resorting to dishonorable arts or to political agitation, they betake themselves to quiet study. They know that their mental calibre will be fairly gauged, and that if they are born to rule, the competitive examinations will open to them a career. The competitive system has not, indeed, proved sufficient to employ all the forces that tend to produce intestine commotion; but it is easy to perceive that without it the shocks must have been more frequent and serious.

2. It operates as a counterpoise to the power of an absolute monarch. Without it the great offices would be filled by hereditary nobles, and the minor offices be farmed out by thousands to imperial favorites*. With it a man of talent may raise himself from the humblest ranks to the dignity of viceroy or premier. *Chiang hsiang pên wu chung*—"The general and the prime-minister are not born in office"—is a line that every schoolboy is taught to repeat. Rising from the people, the mandarins understand the feelings and wants of the people, though it must be confessed that they are usually avaricious and oppressive in proportion to the length of time it has

* The Manchus in order to maintain their power have reserved to themselves an undue proportion of official posts.

taken them to reach their elevation. Still, they have the support and sympathy of the people to a greater extent than they could have if they were creatures of arbitrary power. The system, therefore, introduces a popular element into the government that acts as a check on the prerogative of the Emperor as to the appointment of officers, and serves as a kind of constitution to his subjects, prescribing the conditions on which they shall obtain a share in the administration of the power of the State.

3. It gives the government a hold on the educated gentry, and binds them to the support of existing institutions. It renders the educated classes eminently conservative, because they know that in the event of a revolution civil office would be bestowed, not as the reward of learning, but for political or military services. The *literati*, the most influential portion of the population, are for this reason also the most loyal. It is their support that has upheld the reigning house, though of a foreign race, through these long years of civil commotion, while to the "rebels" it has been a ground of reproach and a source of weakness that they have had but few literary men in their ranks.

In districts where the people have distinguished themselves by zeal in the Imperial cause, the only recompense they crave is a slight addition to the numbers on the competitive prize-list. Such additions the government has made very frequently of late years, in consideration of money supplies. It has also, to relieve its exhausted exchequer, put up for sale the decorations of the literary orders, and issued patents admitting contributors to the higher examinations without passing through the lower grades. But though the government thus debases the coin, it guards itself jealously against the issue of a

spurious currency. Some years ago Pei Ching, first president of the Examining Board at Peking, was put to death for having fraudulently conferred two or three degrees. The fraud was limited in extent, but the damage it threatened was incalculable. It tended to shake the confidence of the people in the administration of that branch of the government which constituted their only avenue to honors and office. Even the Emperor cannot tamper with it without peril. He may lower its demands, in accordance with the wishes of a majority, but he could not set it aside without producing a revolution, for it is the ballot box of the people, the grand charter of their rights.

Such is the Chinese competitive system, and such are some of its advantages and defects. May it not be feasible to graft something of a similar character on our own republican institutions? More congenial to the spirit of our free government, it might be expected to yield better fruits in this country than in China. In British India it works admirably. In Great Britain, too, the diplomatic and consular services have been placed on a competitive basis; and something of the kind must be done for our own foreign service if we wish our influence abroad to be at all commensurate with our greatness and prosperity at home. When will our government learn that a good consul is worth more than a man-of-war, and that an able minister is of more value than a whole fleet of iron-clads? To secure good consuls and able ministers we must choose them from a body of men who have been picked and trained.

In effecting these reforms, the bill of Mr. Jencke, of Rhode Island,* might serve as an entering wedge.

* This was read before the American Oriental Society in 1868, and published in the *North American Review* in July, 1870.



ROW OF CELLS IN EXAMINATION GROUNDS

It would secure the acknowledgment of the principle—certainly not alarmingly revolutionary—that places should go by merit. But it does not go far enough. “It does not,” he says, “touch places which are to be filled with the advice and consent of the Senate. It would not in the least interfere with the scramble for office which is going on at the other end of the Avenue, or which fills with anxious crowds the corridors of the other wing of the Capitol. This measure, it should be remembered, deals only with the inferior officers, whose appointment is made by the President alone, or by the heads of departments.”

But what danger is there of infringing on the rights of the Senate? Is there anything that would aid the Senate so much in giving their “advice and consent” as the knowledge that the applicants for confirmation had proved their competence before a Board of Examiners? And would not the knowledge of the same fact lighten the burdens of the President, and relieve him of much of the difficulty which he now experiences in the selection of qualified men. Such an arrangement would not take away the power of executive appointment, but regulate its exercise. Nor would it, if applied to elective offices, interfere with the people’s freedom of choice further than to insure that the candidates should be men of suitable qualifications. It may not be easy to prescribe rules for that popular sovereignty which follows only its own sweet will, but it is humiliating to reflect that our “man-

Since that date the Civil Service Reform has taken so strong a hold on the public mind that no political party dares to disavow it. It is applied as yet on a very limited scale, but its scope has been greatly extended during the present year (1896), and there is reason to anticipate that competitive examinations may eventually become as important a factor in our political system as they have been in that of China.

darins " are far from being the most intellectual class of the community.*

* The following example of our American methods is literally true—excepting the names of the competitors:

Two men met at Terra Haute, in Indiana (my native State) to discuss the questions of the day before a large assembly, and to ask their fellow citizens for a seat in the State Legislature. Tompkins, who spoke first, was well known to my parents, as a young man of boundless ambition and no education—not even that of a common school. Jacobs, a graduate of Yale College, did not fail in his reply to expose the ignorance of his rival. The latter, in his closing speech, confessed that he had never "rubbed his back against a college wall." "I am a self-made man, and I glory in it. Franklin was a self-made man, so are many of you, my fellow citizens. Are we for that reason to be sneered at by a college prig? Let him bring out his books and I will read with him page for page of Latin and Greek, and you shall be our judges." Jacobs declining the contest as out of place—*coram non judice*—the populace raised a "hurrah for the self-made man" and sent him to the Legislature. Now which is the more civilized mode of making "mandarins," this, or that of the Chinese?

XVIII

THE IMPERIAL ACADEMY

NEAR the foot of a bridge that spans the Imperial Canal a few rods to the north of the British Legation, the visitor to Peking may have noticed the entrance to a small *yamen*. Here are the headquarters of the Hanlin Academy, one of the pivots of the Empire, and the very centre of its literary activity.

On entering the enclosure, nothing meets the eye of one who is unable to read the inscriptions that would awaken the faintest suspicion of the importance of the place. A succession of open courts with broken pavements, and covered with rubbish; five low, shed-like structures, one story in height, that have the appearance of an empty barn; these flanked by a double series of humbler buildings, quite inferior to the stables of a well-conducted farmstead—some of the latter in ruins; and dust and decay everywhere—Such is the aspect presented by the chief seat of an institution which is justly regarded as among the glories of the Empire. A glance, however, at the inscriptions on the walls—some of them in Imperial autograph—warns the visitor that he is not treading on common ground.

This impression is confirmed when, arriving at the last of the transverse buildings, it is found to be locked, and all efforts to obtain an entrance fruitless. Its yellow tiling is suggestive; and the janitor, proof against persuasion, announces, with a mysterious air, that this is a

pavilion sacred to the use of the Emperor. There, concealed from vulgar eyes, stands a throne, on which his Majesty sits in state whenever he deigns to honor the Academy with his presence.

Sundry inscriptions in gilded characters record the dates and circumstances of these Imperial visits, which are by no means so frequent as to be commonplace occurrences. A native guide-book to the "lions" of the capital, devoting eighteen pages to the Hanlin Yuan, dwells with special emphasis on the imposing ceremonial connected with a visit of Ch'ien Lung the Magnificent in the first year of the cycle which occurred after the commencement of his reign.

From this authority we learn that the rooms of the Academy, having fallen into a state of decay, were rebuilt by order of the Emperor, and rededicated, with solemn rites, to the service of letters. His Majesty appeared in person to do honor to the occasion, and conferred on the two presidents the favor of an entertainment in the Imperial pavilion. Of the members of the Academy not fewer than one hundred and sixty-five were present. "Among the proudest recollections of the Hall of Gems" (the Hanlin), says the chronicler, "for a thousand years there was no day like that."

The Emperor further signalized the occasion by two conspicuous gifts.

The first was a present to the library* of a complete set of the wonderful encyclopædia called the *T'u Shu Chi Ch'eng*. Printed in the reign of K'ang Hsi on movable copper types, and comprehending a choice selection of the most valuable works, it extends to six thousand

* This library, and the buildings containing it were set on fire by Imperial soldiers in June 1900, in the hope of burning the British Legation.

volumes, and constitutes of itself a library of no contemptible magnitude.

The other gift, less bulky, but more precious, was an original ode from the Imperial pencil. Written as an impromptu effusion in the presence of the assembled Academicians, it bears so many marks of premeditation that no one could have been imposed on by the artifice of Imperial vanity. It is engraved after the original autograph on a pair of marble slabs, from which we have taken a copy.

In their native dress these verses are worthy of their august author, who was a poet of no mean ability; but in the process of translation they lose as much as a Chinese does in exchanging his flowing silks for the parsimonious costume of the West. At the risk of producing a travesty instead of a translation, we venture to offer a prose version.

ODE

COMPOSED BY THE EMPEROR CH' IEN LUNG ON VISITING THE HANLIN
YUAN IN 1744.

On this auspicious morning the recipients of celestial favor,
Rank after rank, unite in singing the hymn of rededication.
Thus the birds renew their plumage, and the eagle, soaring
heavenward, symbolizes the rise of great men.
Those here who chant poems and expound the Book of Changes
are all worthies of distinguished merit.
Their light concentrates on the embroidered throne, and my pen
distils its flowery characters,
While incense in spiral wreaths rises from the burning censer.
Before me is the pure, bright, pearly Hall;
Compared with this, who vaunts the genii on the islands of the
blest?
A hundred years of æsthetic culture culminate in the jubilee of
this day.

To maintain a state of prosperity, we must cherish fear, and
rejoice with trembling.

In your new poems, therefore, be slow to extol the vastness of
the Empire;

Rather by faithful advice uphold the throne.

I need not seek that ministers like Fu Yüeh shall be revealed
to me in dreams;

For at this moment I am startled to find myself singing the
song of Yao (in the midst of my future ministers).

In my heart I rejoice that ye hundreds of officers all know my
mind,

And will not fan my pride with lofty flattery.

Happy am I to enter this garden of letters,

In the soft radiance of Indian summer;

To consecrate the day to the honor of genius,

And to gather around my table the gems of learning;

But I blush at my unworthiness to entertain the successors of
Fang and Tu.

Why should Ma and Ch'iu be accounted solitary examples?

Here we have a new edition of the ancient Shih Chü (library
of the Hans).

We behold anew the glorious light of a literary constellation.

But the shadow on the flowery tiles has reached the number
eight;

Drink till you are drunk; three times pass round the bowl.

When morning sunlight fell on the pictured screen,

We opened the Hanlin with a feast,

The members assembling in official robes.

We took a glance at the library—enough to load five carts and
fill four storehouses.

We visited in order the well of Liu and the pavilion of Ko.

We watch the pencil trace the gemmy page,

While the waters of Ying Chao (the Pierian Spring) rise to the
brim; and in flowery cups we dispense the fragrant tea.

Anciently ministers were compared to boats which crossed rivers;

With you for my ministers I would dare to encounter the waves
of the sea.

From this effusion of Imperial genius we turn again
to the august body in whose honor it was written, and in-

quire, Where are the apartments in which those learned scribes labor on their elegant tasks? Where is the hall in which they assemble for the transaction of business? Where the library supplied by Imperial munificence for the choicest scholars of the Empire? These questions are soon answered, but not in a way to meet the expectations of the visitor. The composing-rooms are those ranges of low narrow chambers on either hand of the entrance, some of them bearing labels which indicate that it is there the Imperial will puts on its stately robes; but they are empty, and neither swept nor garnished.

Those of the members who have special functions are employed within the precincts of the palace, while the large class known as probationers prosecute their studies in a separate college called the *Shu Ch'ang Kuan*. Common hall, or assembly-room, there is none. The society holds no business meetings. Its organization is despotic; the work of the members being mapped out by the directory, which consists of the presidents and vice-presidents. In an out-of-the-way corner, you are shown a suite of small rooms, which serves as a vestry for these magnates, where they drink tea, change their robes, and post up their records. For this purpose they come together nine times a month, and remain in session about two hours.

As for the other members, they convene only on feast-days as marked in the rubrics of the State, and then it is merely for the performance of religious rites or civil ceremonies. The ritual for both (or rather the calendar) is conspicuously posted on the pillars of the front court, suggesting that the sap and juice of the Academy have dried up, and that these husks of ceremony are the residuum.

So far as this locality is concerned, this is true; for

though the Academy exists, as we shall see, in undiminished vigor, the work intended to be done here is transferred to other places; and but for occasions of ceremony these halls would be as little trodden as those of the academies of Nineveh or Babylon. Of the ceremonies here performed, the most serious is the worship of Confucius, before whose shrine the company of disciples arranged in files, near or remote, according to their rank, kneel three times in the open court, and nine times bow their heads to the earth. A more modern sage, Han Wen Kung, whose chief merit was an eloquent denunciation of Buddhism, is revered as the champion of orthodoxy, and honored with one-third this number of prostrations.

Besides the temples to these lights of literature, there is another shrine in which incense is perpetually burning before the tablets of certain Taoist divinities, among them the god of the North Star.

The juxtaposition of these altars illustrates the curious jumble of religious ideas which prevails even among the educated classes. If Confucianism, pure and simple, calm and philosophic, were to be found anywhere, where should we expect to meet with it if not in the halls of the Hanlin Yuan?

As to the library, it must have been at least respectable in the palmy days of Ch'ien Lung—that Emperor having replenished it, as we have seen, by a gift of six thousand volumes. Copies of a still larger collection of works, the *Sze K'u Ch'üan Shu*, printed in the earlier part of the same reign, were deposited there, as also a manuscript copy of the immense collection known as *Yung Lo Ta Tien*. But in China, libraries are poorly preserved; books have no proper binding, the leaves are loosely stitched, the paper flimsy and adapted to the taste of

a variety of insects, while their official guardians often commit depredations under the influence of an appetite not altogether literary.

Through these combined influences, the Hanlin library has dwindled almost to a vanishing-point. Two of the book-rooms being within the sacred enclosure of the Imperial pavilion, the writer was not permitted to see them. The greater part of the books have been transferred elsewhere; and the condition of those that remain may be inferred from that of the only book-room that was accessible. Its furniture consisted of half a dozen cases, some locked, some open—the latter empty; the floor was strewn with fragments of paper, and the absence of footprints in the thick deposit of dust sufficiently indicated that the pathway to this fountain of knowledge is no longer frequented.

But things in China are not to be estimated by ordinary rules. Here the decay of a building is no indication of the decadence of the institution which it represents. The public buildings of the Chinese are, for the most part, mean and contemptible in comparison with those of Western nations; but it would not be less erroneous for us to judge their civilization by the state of their architecture than for them, as they are prone to do, to measure ours by the tape-line of our tailor. With them architecture is not a fine art; public edifices of every class are constructed on a uniform model; and even in private dwellings there is no such thing as novelty or variety of design. The original idea of both is incapable of much development; the wooden frame and limited height giving them an air of meanness; while the windowless wall, which caution or custom requires to be drawn around every considerable building, excludes it from the public view, and consequently diminishes, if

it does not destroy, the desire for æsthetic effect. Materialistic as the people are in their habits of thought, their government, based on ancient maxims, has sought to repress rather than encourage the tendency to luxury in this direction. The genius of China does not affect excellence in material arts. With more propriety than ancient Rome she might apply to herself the lines of the Roman poet:

“Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra
 . . . regere imperio populos . . .
 Hæ tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem.”

For not only is the Chinese notoriously backward in all those accomplishments in which the Roman excelled, but, without being warlike, he has equalled the Roman in the extent of his conquests, and surpassed him in the permanence of his possessions. With him the art of government is the “great study;” and all else—science, literature, religion—merely subsidiary.

For six hundred years, with the exception of a brief interval, the Hanlin has had its home within the walls of Peking, witnessing from this position the rise of three Imperial dynasties and the overthrow of two. Under the Mongols it stood, not on its present site, but a little to the west of the present drum-tower. Kublai and his successors testified their sense of its importance by installing it in an old palace of the Ch’in Tartars. Ao Yang Ch’u, a discontented scholar of a later age, alluding to the contrast presented by the quarters it then occupied, laments in verse

“The splendid abode of the old Hanlin,
 The glittering palace of the Prince of Ch’in.”

The Ming emperors removed it to its present position, appropriating for its use the site of an old granary. The Ch'ing emperors had a palace to bestow on the Mongolian lamas, but allowed the Hanlin to remain in its contracted quarters, erecting at the same time, in immediate contiguity, a palace for one of their princes. This is now occupied by the British Legation, whose lofty chimneys overlook the grounds of the Academy, and so menace the *fêng-shui* (good luck) of the entire literary corporation. If this were the whole of its history, the Hanlin would still enjoy the distinction of being more than twice as ancient as any similar institution now extant in the Western world; but this last period—one of few vicissitudes—covers no more than half its career. Its annals run back to twice six hundred years, and during that long period it has shared the fortunes and followed the footsteps of the several dynasties which have contended for the mastery of the Empire. From its nature and constitution attached to the court, it has migrated with the court, now north, now south, until the capital became fixed in its present position. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Academy was for a few years at Nanking, where Hung Wu made his capital. During the period of the Crusades it accompanied the court of the Southern Sung as they retired before the invading Tartars, and fixed at Hangchou the seat of their semi-empire. For two centuries previous it had shed its lustre on Pien Liang (Kai Fêng) the capital of the Northern Sung.

During the five short dynasties (907-960) it disappears amidst the confusion of perpetual war, though even then each aspirant for "The Yellow" surrounded himself with some semblance of the Hanlin, as a circum-

stance essential to Imperial state; but its earliest, brightest and longest period of repose was the reign of the T'angs, from 627 to 904, or from the rise of Mahomet till the death of Alfred. For China this is not an ancient date; but it was scarcely possible that such a body, with such objects, should come into existence at any earlier epoch. Under the more ancient dynasties the range of literature was limited, and the style of composition rude. It is not till the long reign of the house of Han that the language obtains its full maturity; but even then taste was little cultivated—the writers of that day being, as the native critics say, more studious of matter than of manner. During the short-lived dynasties that followed the Han and Ch'in, the struggle for power allowed no breathing-time for the revival of letters; but when the Empire, so long drenched in blood, was at length united under the sway of the T'angs, the beginning of the new era of peace and prosperity was marked by an outburst of literary splendor.

For twenty years Kao Tsu, the founder, had been involved in sanguinary conflicts. In such circumstances valor was virtue, and military skill comprised all that was valued in learning. In the work of domestic conquest, his most efficient aid was his second son, Shih Min. Destined to complete what his father had begun, but with a genius more comprehensive and a taste more refined, this young prince was to Kao Tsu what Alexander was to Philip, or Frederick the Great to the rough Frederick William. Studying the poets and philosophers by the light of his camp-fires, he no sooner found himself in undisputed possession of the throne than he addressed himself to the promotion of learning. In this he was only reverting to the traditions of an empire which from the earliest times had always been a worshipper of letters.

But Tai Tsung (the name by which he is called in history) did not confine himself to the beaten path of tradition; he issued a decree that men of ability should be sought out and brought to court from their retired homes and secret hiding-places. His predecessors had done the same; but Tai Tsung formed them into a body under the name of Wên Hsüeh Kuan, and installed them in a portion of his palace, where, the historian tells us, he was accustomed, in the intervals of business and late in the hours of the night, to converse with these learned doctors. The number of these eminent scholars was eighteen, in allusion possibly (though a Confucian would repudiate the idea) to the number of Arhans or disciples who composed the inner circle of the family of Buddha—Buddhism being at that time in high repute. Among these the most prominent were Fang Yuan Ling and Tu Ju Hui, who were afterwards advanced to the rank of ministers of State. We have already seen their names in the Ode of Ch'ien Lung, where they are alluded to as the typical ancestors of the literary brotherhood. This was the germ of the Hanlin Yuan.

Under previous reigns letters had been valued solely as an aid to politics, and scholarship as a proof of qualification for civil employment. But from this time letters began to assume the position of a final cause, and civil employment was made use of as an incentive to encourage their cultivation. Previously to this the single exercise of answering in writing a series of questions intended to gauge the erudition and test the acumen of the candidate was all that was required in examinations for the civil service; but from this epoch taste presided in the literary arena, and compositions, both in prose and verse, in which elegance of style is the chief aim, became thenceforth a leading feature in the curriculum.

That wonderful net which catches the big fish for the service of the Emperor, and allows the smaller ones to slip through, was during this dynasty so far perfected that in the lapse of a thousand years it has undergone no very important change. As might have been expected, the epoch of the T'angs became distinguished above all preceding dynasties as the age of poets. Li Tai Pei—whose brilliant genius was believed to be an incarnation of the golden light of the planet Venus—Tu Fu, Han Yu, and others shed lustre on its opening reigns. Their works have become the acknowledged model of poetic composition, from which no modern writer dares to depart; and, under the collective title of the poetry of T'ang, they have added to the Imperial crown an amaranthine wreath such as no other dynasty has ever worn. Li Tai Pei was admitted to the Academy by Ming Huang or Hun Tsung; the Emperor on that occasion giving him a feast and, as native authors say, condescending to stir the poet's soup with the hand that bore the sceptre.

It is not a little remarkable that the art of printing made its appearance almost simultaneously with the formation of the Academy and the reorganization of the examination system. Originating in a common impulse, all three interacted on each other, and worked together as powerful agencies in carrying forward the common movement. The method of stamping characters on silk or paper had no doubt been discovered long before; but it was under this dynasty that it was first employed for the reproduction of books on a large scale. It was not, however, so employed in the reign of Tai Tsung. That monarch, resolving to found a library that should surpass in extent and magnificence anything that had been known in the past, was unable to imagine a more expeditious, or, at least, a more satisfactory, method of pro-

ducing books than the slow process of transcription. For this purpose a host of pencils would be required; and Tai Tsung, in the interest of his library, made a fresh levy of learned men who were elegant scribes as well as able scholars. To these, Hun Tsung, one of his successors, added another body of scholars, and combining the three classes into one society called it by the name of *Hanlin*, or the "Forest of Pencils"—about A. D. 740—a designation that was now more appropriate than it would have been when the number of its members fell short of a score.

When the printing-press was introduced as an auxiliary in the manufacture of books, it relieved the Imperial scribes of a portion of their labors, but it did not supersede them. Released from the drudgery of copying, they were free to devote their leisure to composition; and in China in the eighth century, as in Europe in the fifteenth, the art of printing imparted a powerful stimulus to the intellectual activity of the age.

Rising, as we have seen, in the halcyon days of Tai Tsung, the Hanlin Yuan was not long in attaining its full development. In the reign of Hun Tsung it received the name by which it is now known, and through twelve centuries, from that day to this, it has undergone no essential modification, either in its objects, membership, or mode of operation; if we except, perhaps, the changes required to adapt it to the duplicate official system of the present dynasty. Its constitution and functions, as laid down in the *Ta Ch'ing Hui Tien*, or Institutes of the Empire, are as follows:

1. There shall be two presidents—one Manchu and one Chinese. They shall superintend the composition of dynastic histories, charts, books, Imperial decrees, and literary matters in general.

2. The vice-presidents shall be of two classes ; namely, the readers, and the expositors to his Majesty the Emperor. In each class there shall be three Manchus and three Chinese.

3. Besides these, the regular members shall consist of three classes—namely, Hsiu Chuan, Pien Hsiu, and Ch'ien Tao—in all of which the number is not limited. These, together with the vice-presidents, shall be charged with the composition and compilation of books, and with daily attendance at stated times on the classic studies of his Majesty.

4. There shall be a class of candidates on probation, termed Shu Ch'i Shih, "lucky scholars," the number not fixed. These shall not be charged with any specific duty, but shall prosecute their studies in the schools attached to the Academy. They shall study both Manchu and Chinese. Their studies shall be directed by two professors—one Manchu and one Chinese—assisted by other members below the grade of readers and expositors, who shall act as divisional tutors. At the expiration of three years they shall be tested as to their ability in poetical composition, the Emperor in person deciding their grades, after which they shall be admitted to an audience; those of the first three grades being received into full membership, and those of the fourth grade, which comprises the remainder, being assigned to posts in the civil service, or retained for another three years to study and be examined with the next class.

5. There shall be two recorders—one Manchu and one Chinese. These shall be charged with the sending and receiving of documents.

6. There shall be two librarians—one Manchu and one Chinese. These shall be charged with the care of the books and charts.

7. There shall be four proof-readers—two Manchus and two Chinese. These shall attend to the revision and collection of histories, memorials, and other literary compositions.

8. There shall be forty-four clerks—forty Manchus and four from the Chinese Banners. These shall be employed in copying and translation.

9. The expositors at the classic table (of the Emperor) shall be sixteen in number—eight Manchus and eight Chinese. The Manchus must be officers who have risen from the third rank or higher. The Chinese also must be of the third rank or higher, having risen from the Academy. These shall be appointed by the Emperor on the recommendation of the Academy. The classic feasts shall take place twice a year—namely, in the second and the eighth month; at which time one Manchu and one Chinese shall expound the Book of History, and one Manchu and one Chinese shall expound the other classics, to be selected from a list prepared by the Academy. The subject and sense of the passages to be treated on these occasions shall in all cases be arranged by consultation with the presidents of the Academy, and laid before the Emperor for his approval. When the Emperor visits the “Palace of Literary Glory,” these expositors, together with the other officers, shall perform their prostrations at the foot of the steps, after which their going in and out shall be according to the form prescribed in the Code of Rites. When they shall have finished their expositions, they shall respectfully listen to the discourses of the Emperor.

10. The daily expositors shall be twenty-eight Manchus and twelve Chinese. They shall be above the grade of Ch’ien Tao and below that of President, and may discharge this duty without resigning their original offices.

11. Prayers and sacrificial addresses for several occasions shall be drawn up by the Hanlin and submitted to the Emperor for his approval. These occasions are the following, namely: at the Altar of Heaven; the Ancestral Temple; the Imperial Cemeteries; the Altar of Agriculture; sacrifices to mountains, seas, and lakes, and to the ancient sage Confucius.

12. The Hanlin shall respectfully prepare honorary titles for the dowager empresses; they shall also draw up patents of dignity for the chief concubines of the late emperor; forms of investiture for new empresses and the chief concubines of new emperors; patents of nobility for princes, dukes, generals, and for feudal states; together with inscriptions on State seals—all of which shall first be submitted for the Imperial approbation.

13. The Hanlin shall respectfully propose posthumous titles for deceased emperors, together with monumental inscriptions and sacrificial addresses for those who are accorded the honor of a posthumous title—all of which shall be submitted to the Emperor for approval.

14. The presidents of the Hanlin shall be *ex officio* vice-presidents of the Bureau of Contemporary History, in which the Hanlin of subordinate grades shall assist as compilers and composers, reverentially recording the sacred instructions (of the Emperor).

15. Prescribes the order of attendance for the Hanlin when the Emperor appears in public court.

16. Prescribes the number and quality of those of the Hanlin who shall attend his Majesty during his sojourn at the Yuan Ming Yuan (Summer Palace).

17. Provides that those members of the Hanlin whose duty it is to accompany his Majesty on his various journeys beyond the capital shall be recommended by the presidents of the Academy.

18. Provides that, when the Emperor sends a deputy to sacrifice to Confucius, certain senior members of the Academy shall make offerings to the twelve chief disciples of the Sage.

19. The Haulin, in conjunction with the Board of Rites, shall copy out and publish the best specimens of the essays produced in the provincial and metropolitan examinations.

20. Prescribes the form to be used in reporting or recommending members for promotion, and provides that when an examination is held for the selection of Imperial censors, the Pien Hsiu and Ch'ien Tao, on recommendation, may be admitted as candidates.

21. Regulates examinations for the admission of probationary members.

22. Admits probationers, after three years of study, to an examination for places in the Academy or official posts elsewhere.

23. Provides for examinations of regular members in presence of the Emperor, at uncertain times, in order to prevent their relapse into idleness.

24. Provides for the promotion of members who are employed as instructors or probationers.

Such is the official account of the Hanlin as at present constituted; but what information does it convey? After all we have done in the way of explanation, in connection with a rather free translation, it still remains a confused mass of titles and ceremonies, utterly devoid of any principle of order; and, without the help of collateral information, much of it would be altogether unintelligible. Interrogate it as to the number of members, the qualifications required for membership, the duration of membership, the manner of obtaining their seats (a term which must be used metaphorically of an association in

which all but a few are expected to stand), and it is silent as the Sphinx. Should one, with a view to satisfying curiosity on the first point, attempt to reckon up the number of classes or divisions, to say nothing of individuals, the number being in some cases purposely indefinite, he would certainly fail of success. Some who are enumerated in those divisions are official employés of the society, but not members; and yet there is nothing in the text to indicate the fact: e. g., the proof-readers are Hanlins, the copyists and translators are not; the librarians are Hanlin, the recorders are not. We shall endeavor briefly to elucidate these several points.

Unlike the academies of Europe, which are voluntary associations for the advancement of learning under royal or imperial patronage, the Hanlin is a body of civil functionaries, a government organ, an integral part of the machinery of the State; its mainspring, as that of every other portion, is in the throne. Its members do not seek admission from love of learning, but for the distinction it confers, and especially as a passport to lucrative employment. They are consequently in a state of perpetual transition, spending from six to ten years in attendance at the Academy, and then going into the provinces as triennial examiners, as superintendents of education, or even in civil or military employments which have no special relation to letters. In all these situations they proudly retain the title of members of the Imperial Academy; and, in their memorials to the throne, one may sometimes see it placed above that of provincial treasurer or judge.

There are, moreover, several *yamens* in the capital that are manned almost exclusively from the members of the Hanlin. Of these the principal are the *Chan Shih Fu* and the *Ch'i Chü Ch'u*; both of which are, in fact, nothing

more than appendages of the Academy. The former, the name of which affords no hint of its functions, appears to bear some such relation to the heir-apparent as the Hanlin does to the Emperor. The beggarly building in which its official meetings are held may be seen on the banks of the canal opposite to the British Legation.* It is, nevertheless, regarded as a highly aristocratic body, and gives employment to a score or so of Academicians. The other, which may be described as the Bureau of Daily Record, employs some twenty more of the Hanlins in the capacity of Boswells to the reigning Emperor, their duty being to preserve a minute record of all his words and actions.

Among the Imperial censors, who form a distinct tribunal, a majority perhaps are taken from the ranks of the Hanlin, but they are not exclusively so; while the higher members of the Hanlin, without being connected with the censorate, are *ex officio* counsellors to his Majesty. Of those whose names are on the rolls as active members of the Academy in regular attendance on its meetings, the number does not exceed three or four score; though on great occasions, such as the advent of an emperor, the ex-members who are within reach are called in and swell the number to twice or thrice that figure. Besides these are the probationers or candidates, to the number of a hundred or more, who pursue their studies for three years under the auspices of the Academy, and then stand examination for membership. If successful, they take their places with the rank and file of the Imperial scribes; otherwise, they are assigned posts in the civil service, such as those of sub-prefect, district magistrate, etc., carrying with them in every position the distinction of having been connected, for

* Used as a refuge for native Christians in the summer of 1900.

however brief a time, with the Imperial Academy. Without counting those rejected candidates, whose claim to the title is more than doubtful, the actual and passed members probably do not fall short of five hundred.

The qualifications for membership are two—natural talent and rare acquisitions in all the departments of Chinese scholarship; but of these we shall treat more at length hereafter. The new members are not admitted by vote of the association, nor appointed by the will of their Imperial master. The seats in this Olympus are put up to competition, and, as in the Hindu mythology, the gifted aspirant, though without name or influence, and in spite of opposition, may win the immortal *amreet*. None enter as the result of capricious favor, and no one is excluded in consequence of unfounded prejudice.

The Hanlin Yuan has not, therefore, like the Institute of France, a long list of illustrious names who acquire additional distinction from having been rejected or overlooked; neither does it suffer from lampoons such as that which a disappointed poet fixed on his own tombstone at the expense of the French Academy—

“Ci-gît Piron, qui ne fut rien,
Pas même académicien.”

In the Chinese Academy the newly initiated has the proud consciousness that he owes everything to himself, and nothing to the complaisance of his associates or the patronage of his superiors.

Of the duties of the Hanlin, these official regulations afford us a better idea—indicating each line of intellectual activity, from the selection of fancy names for people in high position up to the conducting of provincial examinations and the writing of national histories;

but the advancement of science is not among them. They do nothing to extend the boundaries of human knowledge, simply because they are not aware that after the achievements of Confucius and the ancient sages any new world remains to be conquered. The former Emperor, by special decree, referred to the Academy the responsibility of proposing honorific titles for the empresses regent. The result was the pair of euphonious pendants, K'ang I and Kang Ching, with which the Imperial ladies were decorated on retiring from the regency; and we are left to imagine the anxious deliberations, the laborious search for precedents, the minute comparison of the historical and poetical allusions involved in each title, before the learned body were able to arrive at a decision. Since that date the surviving Dowager has been honored by twelve syllables additional.

The composition of prayers to be used by his Majesty or his deputies on sundry occasions, and the writing of inscriptions for the temples of various divinities, in acknowledgment of services, are among the lighter tasks of the Hanlin. They are not, however, like that above referred to, of rare occurrence. Ambitious of anything that can confer distinction on their respective localities, the people of numerous districts petition the throne to honor the temple where they worship by the gift of an Imperial inscription. They ascertain that some time within the past twenty years the divinity there worshipped has interfered to prevent a swollen river from bursting its banks; to avert a plague of locusts, or arrest a protracted drought; or, by a nocturnal display of spectral armies, to drive away a horde of rebels. They report the facts in the case to their magistrates, who verify them, and forward the application to the Emperor, who in turn directs the members of the Hanlin to write the desired

inscription. Cases of this kind abound in the Peking Gazette; one of those best known to foreigners being that of Sze T'ai Wang at Tientsin, whose merit in checking, under the avatar of a serpent, the disastrous floods of 1871 obtained from the Emperor the honor of a commemorative tablet written by the doctors of the Hanlin.

If to these we add the scrolls and tablets written by Imperial decree for schools and charitable institutions throughout the Empire, we must confess that the Hanlin Yuan might earn for itself the title of Academy of Inscriptions in a sense somewhat different from that in which the term is employed in the Western World. Indeed, so disproportionate is the space allotted in the constitution to these petty details, that the reader, judging from that document alone, would be liable to infer that the Academicians were seldom burdened with any more serious employment. But let him go into one of the great libraries connected with the court (unhappily not yet accessible to the foreign student), or even to the great book-stores of the Chinese city, and he will learn at a glance that the Hanlin is not a mere piece of Oriental pageantry. Let him ask for the "Book of Odes;" the salesman hands him an Imperial edition in twenty volumes, with notes and illustrations by the doctors of the Hanlin. If he inquire for the "Book of Rites," or any of the thirteen canonical books, the work is shown him in the same elegant type, equally voluminous in extent, and executed by the hands of the same inexhaustible editors. Then there are histories without number; next to the classics in dignity, and far exceeding them in extent.

In addition to work of this kind, which is constant as the stream of time, the Hanlin supplies writers and editors for all the literary enterprises of the Emperor. Some of

these are so vast that it is safe to say no people would undertake them but those who erected the Great Wall and excavated the Grand Canal; nor would China have had the courage to face them had she not kept on foot as a permanent institution a standing army of learned writers.

Two of these colossal enterprises distinguish the brilliant prime of the present dynasty; while a third, of proportions still more huge, dates back to the second reign of the Mings. This last is the *Yung Lo Ta Tien*, a cyclopædic digest of the Imperial library, which at that time contained 300,000 volumes. There were employed in the task 2169 clerks and copyists, under the direction of a commission consisting of three presidents, five vice-presidents, and twenty sub-directors. The work, when completed, contained 22,937 books, or about half that number of volumes. It was never printed as a whole, and two of the three manuscript copies, together with about a tenth part of the third, were destroyed by fire in the convulsions that attended the overthrow of the Mings.*

In the reign of K'ang Hsi (latter part of the seventeenth century) a similar compilation was executed, numbering 6000 volumes and beautifully printed on movable copper types, with the title of *T'u Shu Chi Ch'eng*.

About a century later, under Ch'ien Lung, a still larger collection, intended to supplement the former, and preserve all that was most valuable in the extant literature, was printed on movable wooden types with the title of *Sze K'u Ch'üan Shu*. These two collections reproduce a great part of the preceding; nevertheless great pains have been taken to copy out and preserve the original work. A commission of members of the Hanlin was appointed

* This third copy was almost totally destroyed with the rest of the library, June, 1900.

for this purpose by Ch'ien Lung, and a copy of the work, it is said, now forms a part of the Hanlin library. In this connection we may mention two other great works executed under the Mings, which have been reproduced by the present dynasty in an abridged or modified form. While the codification of the laws found in Yung Lo a Chinese Justinian, it found its Tribonians among the doctors of the Academy. The "Encyclopædia of Philosophy," compiled by the Hanlin under Yung Lo, the second of the Mings, was abridged by the Hanlin, under K'ang Hsi, the second of the Ch'ings. A still more important labor of the Hanlin, performed by order of the last-named illustrious ruler, was the dictionary which bears his name—a labor more in keeping with its character as a literary corporation.

Thiers speaks of the French Academy as having *la mission à régler la marche de la langue*. It did this by publishing its famous dictionary; and about the same time the members of the Hanlin were performing a similar task for the language of China, by preparation of the great dictionary of K'ang Hsi—a work which stands much higher as an authority than does the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*. A small work, not unworthy of mention in connection with these grave labors, is the Sacred Edict, which goes under the name of K'ang Hsi. It is not, however, the composition of either K'ang Hsi or Yung Cheng, but purely a production of Hanlin pencils. In the Memoirs of the Academy we find a decree assigning the task and prescribing the mode of performance:

“‘Taking,’ says the Emperor, ‘the sixteen edicts (or maxims of seven words each) of our sacred ancestor sur-named the Benevolent for a basis, we desire to expand and illustrate their meaning, for the instruction of our soldiers and people. Let the members of the Hanlin

compose an essay, of between five and six hundred characters, on each text, in a plain and lucid style, shunning alike the errors of excessive polish and rusticity. Let the same text be given to eight or nine persons, each of whom will prepare a discourse, and hand it in in a sealed envelope.' "

From this it appears that the sixteen elegant discourses which compose the body of that work are selections from over a hundred—the picked performances of picked men.

In the early part of the Manchu dynasty, the Hanlin were much engaged in superintending the translation of Chinese works into Manchu, a language now so little understood by the Tartars of Peking that those voluminous versions have almost ceased to be of any practical value. Under the present reign the learned doctors have been working somewhat in a different direction, showing that the Chinese are not so incapable of innovation as is usually supposed. A minority reign naturally suggested the want of a royal road to the acquisition of knowledge; our Hanlin doctors were accordingly directed to supply his Majesty with copies of *History made easy* and the *Classics made easy*. The mode of making easy was a careful rendering into the Mandarin or court dialect—a style which these admirable doctors disdain as much as the mediæval scholars of Europe did the vernacular of their day. May we not hope that these works, after educating the Emperor, will, like those prepared by the Jesuits (for the Dauphin), be brought to the light for the instruction of his people?

As it is intended here to indicate the variety rather than the extent of the literary labors of the Hanlin, these remarks would be incomplete if they did not refer to their poetry. They are all poets; each a laureate, devoting his

talents to the glorification of his Imperial patron. Swift said of an English laureate,

“Young must torture his invention
To flatter knaves, or lose a pension.”

In China the office is not held on such a condition. Sage emperors have been known to strike out with their own pen the finest compliments offered them by their official bards. Ch'ien Lung, as we have seen, felt it necessary to warn the Hanlin against the prevailing vice of poets and pensioners. In China poetry is put to a better purpose; Imperial decrees and official proclamations are often expressed in verse, for the same reason that induced Solon to borrow the aid of verse in the promulgation of his laws. Didactic compositions in verse are without number, and for the most part as dry as Homer's catalogue of the fleet. A popular cyclopædia for instance, in over a score of volumes, treats of all imaginable subjects in a kind of irregular verse called *fu*.

Employed as scribes and editors, it would be too much to expect that the Hanlin should distinguish themselves for originality. It is a rare thing for an original work to spring from the brain of an Academician. In imitation of Confucius, they might inscribe over their door, “We edit, but we do not compose.”

“On entering this hall,” said M. Thiers, on taking his seat in the French Academy, “I feel the proudest recollections of our national history awakening within me. Here it is that Corneille, Bossuet, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, one after another, came and took their seats; and here more recently have sat Laplace and Cuvier. . . . Three great men, Laplace, Lagrange, and Cuvier, opened the century; a numerous band of young and ardent intel-

lects have followed in their wake. Some study the primeval history of our planet, thereby to illustrate the history of its inhabitants; others, impelled by the love of humanity, strive to subjugate the elements in order to ameliorate the condition of man; still others study all ages and traverse all countries, in hopes of adding something to the treasures of intellectual and moral philosophy. . . . Standing in the midst of you, the faithful and constant friends of science, permit me to exclaim, happy are those that take part in the noble labors of this age!"

In this passage we have a true portraiture of the spirit that animates the *peccage* of the Western intellect; they lead the age in every path of improvement, and include in their number those whom a viceroy of Egypt felicitously described, not as *peers*, but as *les têtes couronnées de la science*. How different from the drowsy routine which prevails in the chief tribunal of Chinese learning. Of all this the Chinese Academician has no conception; he is an anachronism, his country is an anachronism, as far in the rear of the world's great march as were the people of a secluded valley, mentioned in Chinese literature, who, finding there an asylum from trouble and danger, declined intercourse with the rest of mankind, and after the lapse of many centuries imagined that the dynasty of Han was still upon the throne.

It is doing our Hanlin a species of injustice to compare him with the Academicians, or even with the commonalty of the West, in a scientific point of view; for science is just the thing which he does not profess, and that general information which is regarded as indispensable by the average intelligence of Christendom is to the Hanlin a foreign currency, which has no recognized value in the market of his country; nevertheless, we shall proceed to

interrogate him as to his information on a few points, merely for the sake of bringing to view the actual condition of the educated mind of China.

In history he can recite with familiar ease the dynastic records of his own country for thousands of years; but he never heard of Alexander or Cæsar or the first Napoleon. Of the third Napoleon he may have learned something from a faint echo of the catastrophe at Sedan, certainly not from the missions of Burlingame or Ch'ung Hao—events that are as yet too recent to have reached the ears of these students of antiquity, who, whatever their faults, are not chargeable with being *rerum novarum avidi*.

In geography he is not at home even among the provinces of China proper, and becomes quite bewildered when he goes to the north of the Great Wall. Of Columbus and the New World he is profoundly ignorant, not knowing in what part of the globe lies the America of which he may have heard as one among the Treaty Powers. With the names of England and France he is better acquainted, as they have left their record in open ports and ruined palaces. Russia he thinks of as a semi-barbarous state, somewhere among the Mongolian tribes, which formerly brought tribute, and was vanquished in conflict—her people being led in triumph by the prowess of K'ang Hsi.*

In astronomy he maintains the dignity of our native globe as the centre of the universe, as his own country is the middle of the habitable earth—a conviction in which he is confirmed by the authority of those learned Jesuits who persisted in teaching the Ptolemaic system three centuries after the time of Copernicus. Of longitude

* The Siberian garrison of Albazin were brought to Peking, where their descendants still reside.

and latitude he has no conception; and refuses even to admit the spherical form of the earth, because an ancient tradition asserts that "heaven is round and the earth square." To him the stars are shining characters on the book of fate, and eclipses portents of approaching calamity.

In zoology he believes that tigers plunging into the sea are transformed into sharks, and that sparrows by undergoing the same baptism are converted into oysters; for the latter metamorphosis is gravely asserted in canonical books, and the former is a popular notion which he cares not to question. Arithmetic he scorns as belonging to shopkeepers; and mechanics he disdains on account of its relation to machinery and implied connection with handicraft.

Of general physics he nevertheless holds an ill-defined theory, which has for its basis the dual forces that generated the universe, and the five elements which profess to comprehend the components of all material forms, but omit the atmosphere. Of the nature of these elements his text-book gives the following luminous exposition: namely, that "the nature of water is to run downward; the nature of fire is to flame upward; the nature of wood is to be either crooked or straight; the nature of metals is to be pliable, and subject to change; the nature of earth is to serve the purposes of agriculture."*

So weighty is the information contained in these sentences that he accepts them as a special revelation, the bed-rock of human knowledge, beneath which it would be useless, if not profane, to attempt to penetrate. It never occurs to our philosopher to inquire *why* water flows downward, and *why* fire ascends; to his mind both are ultimate facts. On this foundation human sagacity

* From the *Hung Fan* in the *Shu Ching*.

has erected the pantheon of universal science. This it has done by connecting the five elements with the five planets, the five senses, the five musical tones, the five colors, and the five great mountain ranges of the earth; the quintal classification originating in the remarkable observation that man has five fingers on his hand, and setting forth the harmony of nature as a connected whole with a beautiful simplicity that one seeks for in vain in the Kosmos of Humboldt.

This system, which our Hanlin accepts, though he does not claim the merit of having originated it, is not a mere fanciful speculation; it is a practical doctrine skilfully adapted to the uses of human life. In medicine it enables him to adapt his remedies to the nature of the disease. When he has contracted a fever on shipboard or in a dwelling that has a wooden floor, he perceives at once the origin of his malady, or his physician informs him that "wood produces fire;" earth is wanted to restore the balance, i. e. life on shore, or outdoor exercise.

In the conduct of affairs it enables him to get the lucky stars in his favor, and, through the learned labors of the Board of Astronomy, it places in his hands a guide-book which informs him when he should commence or terminate an enterprise, when he may safely venture abroad, and when it would be prudent to remain at home. It enables him to calculate futurity, and obtain the advantages of a kind of *scientia media*, or conditional foreknowledge; to know how to arrange a marriage so as to secure felicity according to the horoscope of the parties; and ascertain where to locate the dwellings of the living or the resting-places of the dead, in order to insure to their families the largest amount of prosperity.

These occult sciences the Hanlin believes implicitly, but he does not profess to understand them—contented

in such matters to be guided by the opinion of professional experts. A Sadducee in creed and an epicure in practice, the comforts of the present life constitute his highest idea of happiness; yet he never thinks of devising any new expedient for promoting the physical well-being of his people. Like some of the philosophers of our Western antiquity, he would feel degraded by occupation with anything lower than politics and ethics, or less refined than poetry and rhetoric. "Seneca," says Lord Macaulay, "labors to clear Democritus from the disgraceful imputation of having made the first arch; and Anacharsis from the charge of having contrived the potter's wheel." No such apologist is required for our doctors of the Hanlin, inasmuch as no such impropriety was ever laid to their charge.

The noble motto of the French Institute, *Invenit et perfecit*, is utterly alien from the spirit and aims of the Academicians of China. With them the Golden Age is in the remote past; everything for the good of human society has been anticipated by the wisdom of the ancients.

"Omnia jam ferme mortalibus esse parata."

Nothing remains for them to do but to walk in the footsteps of their remote ancestors.

Having thus subjected our Academician to an examination in the elements of a modern education, we must again caution our readers against taking its result as a gauge of mental power or actual culture. In knowledge, according to our standard, he is a child; in intellectual force, a giant. A veteran athlete, the victor of a hundred conflicts, his memory is prodigious, his apprehension quick, and his taste in literary matters exquisite.

"It is a dangerous error," says an erudite editor of

Sir W. Hamilton, "to regard the cultivation of our faculties as subordinate to the acquisition of knowledge, instead of knowledge being subordinate to the cultivation of our faculties. In consequence of this error, those sciences which afford a greater number of more certain facts have been deemed superior in utility to those which bestow a higher cultivation on the higher faculties of the mind."

The peculiar discipline under which the Hanlin is educated, with its advantages and defects, we shall indicate in another place. Before quitting this branch of the subject, we may remark, however, that its result as witnessed in the Hanlin is not, as generally supposed, a feeble, superficial polish which unfits its recipient for the duties of practical life; on the contrary, membership in the Hanlin is avowedly a preparation for the discharge of political functions, a stepping-stone to the highest offices in the State. The Academician is not restricted to functions that partake of a literary character; he may be a viceroy as well as a provincial examiner; a diplomatic minister as well as a rhymester of the court.

In glancing over the long catalogue of the Academic Legion of Honor, one is struck by the large proportion of names that have become eminent in the history of their country.

We have had occasion more than once in the preceding pages to refer to the Memoirs of the Academy. These records, unfortunately, extend back no further than the accession of the present dynasty, in 1644; and they terminate with 1801, comprising only a little more than one and a half of the twelve centuries of the society's existence. Published under Imperial auspices in thirty-two thin volumes, they are so divided that the books or sections amount to the cabalistic number sixty-four, the square of

the number of the original diagrams which form the basis of the *I Ching*, the national Book of Divination.

The first thing that strikes us on opening the pages of that work is the spirit of imperialism with which they appear to be saturated. The transactions of his Majesty constitute the chief subject; the performances of the members are mentioned only incidentally; and the whole association is exhibited in the character of an elaborate system of belts and satellites purposely adjusted to reflect the splendor of a central luminary. Cast your eye over the table of contents and see with what relief this idea stands out as a controlling principle in the arrangement of the work.

The first two books are devoted to what are called *Sheng Yü*, Holy Edicts, i. e. expressions of the Imperial mind in regard to the affairs of the society in any manner, however informal. Six books are given to *T'ien Chang*, or Celestial Rhetoric, i. e. productions of the vermilion pencil in prose and verse. Eight books record the imposing ceremonies connected with Imperial visits to the halls of the Academy; six books commemorate the marks of Imperial favor bestowed on members of the Academy; sixteen of the remaining forty-two are occupied with a catalogue of those members who have been honored with appointments to serve in the Imperial presence, or with special commissions of other kinds. In the residuary twenty-six we should expect to find specimens of the proper work of the Academy, and so we do; for no less than three books are taken up with ceremonial tactics; forms to be observed in attendance on the Emperor on sundry occasions, the etiquette of official intercourse, etc.; these things occupying a place among the serious business of the society. Fourteen are filled with specimens of prose and verse from the pens of leading

members, and one is assigned to a high-flown description of the magnificence of the academical buildings; the rest contain a meagre catalogue of official employments and literary labors.

What a picture does this present—a picture drawn by themselves—of the highest literary corporation in the Empire! Yet, notwithstanding the enormous toadyism with which they are inflated, we do not hesitate to say that the twenty-two books especially devoted to the Emperors are by far the most readable and instructive portion of the Memoirs. They throw light on the personal character of these monarchs, exhibit the nature of their intercourse with their subjects, and illustrate the estimation in which polite letters are held in the view of the government.

The first chapter opens with the following:

“Shun Chi, the founder of the Imperial family, in the tenth year of his reign, visited the Inner Hall of the Academy, for the purpose of inspecting the translation of the Five Classics. On this occasion, his Majesty said, ‘The virtues of Heaven and the true method of government are all recorded in the Book of History; its principles will remain unalterable for ten thousand generations.’”

The translation referred to was into the Manchu language; it was made for the purpose of enabling the conquering race the more speedily to acquire the civilization of the conquered.

The young sovereign, then only sixteen years of age, shows by this brief speech how thoroughly he had become imbued with the spirit of the Confucian books. The record proceeds:

“In the fifth moon of the same year, his Majesty again visiting the Inner Hall, inquired of the directors why the writers had ceased from their work so early. The Chan-

cellor Fan replied, 'This is the summer solstice; we suspend our labors a little earlier on that account.'

"The Emperor, looking round on his attendant officers, said, 'To take advantage of some peculiarity of the season to make a holiday is natural; but if you wish to enjoy repose, you must first learn to labor; you must aid in settling the Empire on a secure basis, and then your days of rest will not be disturbed. If you aim only at pleasure without restraining your desires, placing self and family first and the Empire second, your pleasure will be of short duration. Behold, for example, *our* course of conduct, how diligent we are in business, how anxiously we strive to attain perfection. It is for this reason *we* take pleasure in hearing the discourses of these learned men; men of the present day are good at talking, but they are not so good at acting. Why so? Because they have no settled principles; they act one way to-day and another to-morrow. But who among mortals is free from faults? If one correct his faults when he knows them, he is a good man; if, on the contrary, he conceal his faults and present the deceptive aspect of virtue, his errors multiply and his guilt becomes heavier. If *we*, and you, our servants are diligent in managing the affairs of state, so that the benefit shall reach the people, Heaven will certainly vouchsafe its protection; while on those who do evil without inward examination or outward reform, Heaven will send down calamity. . . . If your actions were virtuous, would Heaven afflict you? Ch'eng T'ang was a virtuous ruler, yet he did not spare pains in correcting his faults; on the contrary, Cheng Tê, of the Ming dynasty, had his heart set on enjoyment, and clung to his own vices, while he was perpetually finding fault with the shortcomings of his ministers. When

the prince himself refuses to reform, the reformation of his people will be impossible, however virtuous his officers may be.' ”

This little sermon, excepting the preceding brief encomium on the sacred books, is all that the Academy has thought fit to preserve of the discourses of Shun Chi. His son, the illustrious K'ang Hsi, fills a large space in the Memoirs. Here are a few extracts, by way of specimens :

“The Emperor K'ang Hsi, in the ninth year of his reign (the fifteenth of his age), said to the officers of the Board of Rites, ‘If one would learn the art of government, he must explore the classic learning of the ancients. Whenever *we* can find a day of leisure from affairs of state, we spend it in the study of the classics. Reflecting that what is called Classic Feast and Daily Exposition are important usages, which ought to be revived, you are required to examine and report on the necessary regulations.’ ”

In his twelfth year, his Majesty said to the Academician Fu Ta Li, “To cherish an inquiring mind is the secret of progress in learning. If a lesson be regarded as an empty form, and when finished, be dismissed from the thoughts, what benefit can there be to heart or life? As for *us*, when our servants (the Hanlin) are through with their discourses, *we* always reflect deeply on the subject-matter, and talk over with others any new ideas we may have obtained; *our* single aim being a luminous perception of the truth. The intervals of business, whether the weather be hot or cold, *we* occupy in reading and writing.”

So saying, his Majesty exhibited a specimen of his penmanship, remarking that calligraphy was not the study of a prince, but that *he* found amusement in it.

In the ninth moon of the same year, his Majesty said

to Hsiang Tze Lü, "The precept in the *Ta Hsiieh*, on the study of things, is very comprehensive; it is not to be limited to mathematical inquiries and mechanical contrivances."

Again he said, "Heaven and earth, past and present, are governed by one law. Our aim should be to give our learning the widest possible range, and to condense it into the smallest possible compass."

In the fourteenth year, his Majesty, on reading a paper of the Hanlin, and finding himself compared to the Three Kings and Two Emperors (of ancient times), condemned the expression as a piece of empty flattery, and ordered it to be changed.

In the sixteenth year, his Majesty said, "Learning must be reduced to practice in order to be beneficial. You are required to address me with more frankness, concealing nothing, in order to aid me in carrying into practice the principles to which I have attended."

In the nineteenth year, the Emperor, in bestowing on members of the Hanlin, specimens of his autograph, remarked that in ancient times sovereign and subject were at liberty to criticise each other, and he desired them to exercise that liberty in regard to his handwriting, which he did not consider as a model.

In the twenty-first year, in criticising certain specimens of ancient chirography, his Majesty pointed to one from the pen of Lu Kung, remarking, "In the firmness and severity of these strokes I perceive the heroic spirit with which the writer battled with misfortune."

In the twenty-second year, his Majesty ordered that the topics chosen for the letters of the Classic Feast should not, as hitherto, be selected solely with reference to the sovereign, but that they should be adapted to instruct and stimulate the officers as well.

In the twenty-third year, his Majesty was on a journey, when, the boat mooring for the night, he continued reading until the third watch. His clerk—a member of the Hanlin—had to beg his Majesty to allow himself a little more time for repose; whereupon his Majesty gave a detailed account of his habits of study, all the particulars of which are here faithfully preserved.

In the forty-third year, his Majesty said to the High Chancellor and members of the Academy, "From early youth I have been fond of the ink-stone; every day writing a thousand characters, and copying with care the chirography of the famous scribes of antiquity. This practice I have kept up for more than thirty years, because it was the bent of my nature. In the Manchu I also acquired such facility that I never make a mistake. The endorsements on memorials from viceroys and governors, and Imperial placets, are all written with my own hand, without the aid of a preliminary draft. Things of any importance, though months and years may elapse, I never forget, notwithstanding the endorsed documents are on file in the respective offices, and not even a memorandum left in my hands."

In the fiftieth year, his Majesty said to the High Chancellors,

"In former generations I observe that, on occasion of the Classic Feast, the sovereign was accustomed to listen in respectful silence, without uttering a word. By that means his ignorance was not exposed, though he might not comprehend a word of the discourse. The usage was thus a mere name without the substance.

"As for me, I have now reigned fifty years and spent all my leisure hours in diligent study; and whenever the draft of a discourse was sent in, I never failed

to read it over. If by chance a word or sentence appeared doubtful, I always discussed it with my literary aids; for the Classic Feast is an important institution, and not by any means to be viewed as an insignificant ceremony."

Of Yung Cheng, the son and successor of K'ang Hsi, the Memoirs have preserved but a single discourse, and of that only its opening sentence is worth quoting. His Majesty said to the members of the Hanlin, "Literature is your business, but we want such literature as will serve to regulate the age and reflect glory on the nation. As for sonnets to the moon and the clouds, the winds and the dews—of what use are they?"

The next Emperor, Ch'ien Lung, far surpassed his predecessors in literary taste and attainments; and his reign being long (sixty years), his communications to the Hanlin are more than proportionally voluminous. Space, however, compels us to make our extracts in the inverse ratio. Many of the preceding and some which follow have nothing to do with the Academy, save that they were speeches uttered in the hearing of the Hanlin, and by them recorded. This, however, is to the point.

In the second year his Majesty said to the general directors, "Yesterday we examined the members of the Academy, giving them for a theme the sentence 'It is hard to be a sovereign, and to be a subject is not easy.' Of course there is a difference in the force of the expression 'hard' and 'not easy,' yet not one of them perceived the distinction." Here follows an elaborate exposition from the vermilion pencil, which I must forego, at the risk of leaving my readers in perpetual darkness as to the momentous distinction. It is, however, but just to say that the Emperor intends the paper, not as a scholastic exercise, but as a political lesson.

In the fifth year, his Majesty says he has remarked that the addresses of the Hanlin contain a large amount of adulation, and a very small amount of instruction. He accordingly recommends them to modify their style. Two years later he complains that "the Hanlin often make a test from the sacred books a stalking-horse for irrelevant matters; e. g. Chou Chang Fa, in lecturing on the Book of Rites, took occasion to laud the magnificence of our sacrifice at the Altar of Heaven as without a parallel a thousand years." "Before the sacrifice," he says,

"'Heaven gave a good omen in a fall of snow, and during its performance the sun shone down propitiously.' Now these rites were not of my institution; moreover, the soft winds and gentle sunshine on the occasion were purely accidental; for at that very time the Province of Chiangnan was suffering from disastrous floods and my mind tormented with anxiety on that account. Let Chow Chang Fa be severely reprimanded, and let the other Hanlin take warning."

Among the remaining speeches of Ch'ien Lung, there are three that do him credit as a vindicator of the truth of history. In one of them he rebukes the historiographers for describing certain descendants of the Mings as usurpers, observing that they came honestly by their titles, though they were not able to maintain them. In another he criticises the ignorance and wilful perversions of facts exhibited by Chinese historians in their account of the three preceding Tartar dynasties—namely, the Liao, Ch'in, and Yuan. And in the last he reproves his own writers of history for omitting the name of a meritorious individual who had fallen into disgrace.

Among the communications of the next Emperor Chia Ching (the Memoirs close with the fourth year of his

reign), I find nothing of sufficient interest to be worth the space it would occupy.

Thus far the Emperors; what the Hanlin say to them in conversation or formal discourse is not recorded. But we know that they are so situated as to exert a more direct influence on the mind of their master than subjects of any other class. They are the instructors of his youth, and the counsellors of his maturer years; and this, the fixing of the views and moulding of the character of the autocrat of the Empire, we may fairly regard as their most exalted function.

But if they influence the Emperor, we see in the preceding paragraphs how easy it is for the Emperor to influence them. Herein is our hope for the rehabilitation of the Academy. Far from being decayed or effete, it contains as many and as active minds as at any previous period. At present they spend much of their time in making "sonnets to the moon;" but if the Emperor were so disposed, he could change all that in a moment. He could employ the Hanlin in translating out of English as well as into Manchu—in studying science as well as letters.

Nor are indications wanting that this change in the direction of their mental activity is likely to take place. Some years ago Prince Kung proposed that the junior members of the Hanlin should be required to attend the Tung Wên College, for the purpose of acquiring the languages and sciences of Europe. Wo Jen, a president of the Hanlin and teacher of the Emperor, presented a counter-memorial, and the measure failed. But such is the march of events that the same measure, possibly in some modified form, is sure to be revived, and destined to be finally successful.

When that time arrives, the example of the Academy

will have great weight in promoting a radical revolution in the character of the national education.*

* After the war with Japan, the younger academicians organized a Reform Club, and began to talk about the need of a parliament. The club was suppressed by decree, but most of its members were still active in the cause of educational reform. On the opening of the New University some entered as students of foreign languages.

XIX

AN OLD UNIVERSITY IN CHINA

IT is not, perhaps, generally known that Peking contains an ancient university; for, though certain buildings connected with it have been frequently described, the institution itself has been but little noticed. It gives, indeed, so few signs of life that it is not surprising it should be overlooked. And yet few of the institutions of this hoary Empire are invested with a deeper interest, as venerable relics of the past, and, at the same time, as mournful illustrations of the degenerate present.

If a local situation be deemed an essential element of identity, this old university must yield the palm of age to many in Europe, for in its present site it dates, at most, only from the Yuan, or Mongol dynasty, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. But as an imperial institution, having a fixed organization and definite objects, it carries its history, or at least its pedigree, back to a period far anterior to the founding of the Great Wall.

Among the Regulations of the House of Chou, which flourished a thousand years before the Christian era, we meet with it already in full-blown vigor, and under the identical name which it now bears, that of Kuo Tze Chien, or "School for the Sons of the Empire." It was in its glory before the light of science dawned on Greece, and when Pythagoras and Plato were pumping their secrets from the priests of Heliopolis. It still exists, but it is only an embodiment of "life in death:" its halls are tombs, and its officers living mummies.

In the 13th Book of *Chou Li* we find the functions of the heads of the Kuo Tze Chien laid down with a good deal of minuteness.

The presidents were to admonish the Emperor of that which is good and just, and to instruct the Sons of the State in the "five constant virtues" and the "three practical duties"—in other words, to give a course of lectures on moral philosophy. The vice-presidents were to reprove the Emperor for his faults (i. e. to perform the duty of official censors) and to discipline the Sons of the State in sciences and arts—viz., in arithmetic, writing, music, archery, horsemanship, and ritual ceremonies. The titles and offices of the subordinate instructors are not given in detail, but we are able to infer them with a good degree of certainty from what we know of the organization as it now exists.

The old curriculum is religiously adhered to, but greater latitude is given, as we shall have occasion to observe, to the term "Sons of the State." In the days of Chou, this meant the heir-apparent, princes of the blood, and children of the nobility. Under the Ta Ch'ing dynasty it signifies men of defective scholarship throughout the provinces, who purchase literary degrees, and more specifically certain indigent students of Peking, who are aided by the imperial bounty.

The Kuo Tze Chien is located in the northeastern angle of the Tartar city, with a temple of Confucius attached, which is one of the finest in the Empire. The main edifice (that of the temple) consists of a single story of imposing height, with a porcelain roof of tent-like curvature. It shelters no object of veneration beyond simple tablets of wood inscribed with the name of the sage and those of his most illustrious disciples. It contains no seats, as all comers are expected to stand or kneel in presence



THE IMPERIAL LECTURE ROOM, OLD UNIVERSITY BUILDING



PROSPECT HILL WHERE THE LAST OF THE MINGS HANGED HIMSELF

of the Great Teacher. Neither does it boast anything in the way of artistic decoration, nor exhibit any trace of that neatness and taste which we look for in a sacred place. Perhaps its vast area is designedly left to dust and emptiness, in order that nothing may intervene to disturb the mind in the contemplation of a great name which receives the homage of a nation.

Gilded tablets, erected by various emperors—the only ornamental objects that meet the eye—record the praises of Confucius; one pronounces him the “culmination of the sages,” another describes him as forming a “trinity with Heaven and Earth,” and a third declares that “his holy soul was sent down from heaven.” A grove of cedars, the chosen emblem of a fame that never fades, occupies a space in front of the temple, and some of the trees are huge with the growth of centuries.

In an adjacent block or square stands a pavilion known as the “Imperial Lecture-room,” because it is incumbent on each occupant of the Dragon throne to go there at least once in his lifetime to hear a discourse on the nature and responsibilities of his office—thus conforming to the letter of the *Chou Li*, which makes it the duty of the officers of the university to administer reproof and exhortation to their sovereign,* and doing homage to the university by going in person to receive its instruction.

A canal spanned by marble bridges encircles the pavilion, and arches of glittering porcelain, in excellent repair, adorn the grounds. But neither these nor the pavilion itself constitutes the chief attraction of the place.

Under a long corridor which encloses the entire space may be seen as many as one hundred and eighty-two

* They still discharge these functions in writing, their memorials frequently appearing in the pages of the *Peking Gazette*.

columns of massive granite, each inscribed with a portion of the canonical books. These are the "Stone Classics"—the entire "Thirteen," which form the staple of a Chinese education, being here enshrined in a material supposed to be imperishable. Among all the universities in the world, the Kuo Tze Chien is unique in the possession of such a library.

This is not, indeed, the only stone library extant—another of equal extent is found at Hsi An,* the ancient capital of the T'angs. But that, too, was the property of the Kuo Tze Chien ten centuries ago, when Hsi An was the seat of empire. The "School for the Sons of the Empire" must needs follow the migrations of the court; and that library, costly as it was, being too heavy for transportation, it was thought best to supply its place by the new edition which we have been describing.

The use of this heavy literature is a matter for speculation, a question almost as difficult of solution as the design of the pyramids. Was it intended to supply the world with a standard text—a safe channel through which the streams of wisdom might be transmitted pure and undefiled? Or were their sacred books engraved on stone to secure them from any modern madman, who might take it into his head to emulate the Tyrant of Ch'in, the burner of the books and builder of the Great Wall? If the former was the object, it was useless, as paper editions, well executed and carefully preserved, would have answered the purpose equally well. If the latter, it was absurd, as granite though fire-proof, is not indestructible; and long before these columns were erected, the discovery of the art of printing had forever placed the depositories of wisdom beyond the reach of the bar-

* The city to which the Empress Dowager and her court retired when the Allied troops captured Peking in 1900.

barian's torch. It is characteristic of the Chinese to ask for no better reason than ancient custom. Their forefathers engraved these classics on stone, and they must do the same. But whatever may have been the original design, the true light in which to regard these curious books is that of an impressive tribute to the sources of Chinese civilization.

I may mention here that the Rev. Dr. Williamson, on a visit to Hsi An saw many persons engaged in taking "rubblings" from the stone classics of that city; and he informs us that complete copies were sold at a very high rate. The popularity of the Hsi An tablets is accounted for by the flavor of antiquity which they possess, and especially by the style of the engraving, which is much admired—or, more properly, the calligraphy which it reproduces. Those of Peking are not at all patronized by the printers, and yet if textual accuracy were the object, they ought, as a later edition, to be more highly prized than the others. A native cicerone whom I once questioned as to the object of these stones replied, with a naïveté quite refreshing, that they were "set up for the amusement of visitors"—an answer which I should have set to the credit of his ready wit, if he had not proceeded to inform me that neither students nor editors ever come to consult the text, and that "rubblings" are never taken.

In front of the temple stands a forest of columns of scarcely inferior interest. They are three hundred and twenty in number, and contain the university roll of honor, a complete list of all who since the founding of the institution have attained to the dignity of the doctorate. Allow to each an average of two hundred names, and we have an army of doctors sixty thousand strong! (By the doctorate I mean the third or highest degree.) All these received their investiture at the Kuo Tze Chien

and, throwing themselves at the feet of its president, enrolled themselves among the "Sons of the Empire." They were not, however—at least the most of them were not—in any proper sense alumni of the Kuo Tze Chien, having pursued their studies in private, and won their honors by public competition in the halls of the Civil-service Examining Board.

This granite register goes back for six hundred years; but while intended to stimulate ambition and gratify pride, it reads to the new graduate a lesson of humility—showing him how remorselessly time consigns all human honors to oblivion. The columns are quite exposed, and those that are more than a century old are so defaced by the weather as to be no longer legible.

If in the matter of conferring degrees the Kuo Tze Chien "beats the world," it must be remembered that it enjoys the monopoly of the Empire—so far as the doctorate is concerned.

Besides these departments, intended mainly to commemorate the past, there is an immense area occupied by lecture-rooms, examination-halls, and lodging-apartments. But the visitor is liable to imagine that these, too, are consecrated to a monumental use—so rarely is a student or a professor to be seen among them. Ordinarily they are as desolate as the halls of Baalbec or Palmyra. In fact, this great school for the "Sons of the Empire" has long ceased to be a seat of instruction, and degenerated into a mere appendage of the civil-service competitive examinations, on which it hangs as a dead weight, corrupting and debasing instead of advancing the standard of national education.

By an old law, made for the purpose of enhancing the importance of this institution, the possession of a scholarship carries with it the privilege of wearing decorations

which belong to the first degree, and of entering the lists to compete for the second. This naturally caused such scholarships to be eagerly sought for, and eventually had the effect of bringing them into market as available stock on which to raise funds for government use. A price was placed on them, and like the papal indulgences, they were vended throughout the Empire.

Never so high as to be beyond the reach of aspiring poverty, their price has now descended to such a figure as to convert these honors into objects of contempt. In Peking it is twenty-three taels (about thirty silver dollars), but in the provinces they can be had for half that sum. Not long ago one of the censors expostulated with his Majesty on the subject of these sales. He expressed in strong language his disgust at the idea of clodhoppers and muleteers appearing with the insignia of literary rank, and denounced in no measured terms the cheap sale of ranks and offices generally. Still—and the fact is not a little curious—it was not the principle of selling which he condemned, but that reckless degradation of prices which had the effect of spoiling the market.

It is not our purpose to take up the lamentation of this patriotic censor, or to show how the opening of title and office brokereries lowers the credit and saps the influence of the government. Yet this traffic has a close relation to the subject in hand; for, whatever rank or title may be the object of purchase, a university scholarship must of necessity be purchased along with it, as the root on which it is grafted. Accordingly the flood-gates of this fountain of honors are kept wide open, and a very deluge of diplomas issues from them. A year or two ago a hundred thousand were sent into the provinces at one time!

The scholars of this old institution accordingly out-

number those of Oxford or Paris in their palmiest days. But there are thousands of her adopted children who have never seen the walls of Peking, and thousands more within the precincts of the capital who have never entered her gates.

Those who are too impatient to wait the slow results of competition in their native districts are accustomed to seek at the university the requisite qualifications for competing for the higher degrees. These qualifications are not difficult of attainment—the payment of a trifling fee and submission to a formal examination being all that is required.

For a few weeks previous to the great triennial examinations, the lodging-houses of the university are filled with students who are “cramming” for the occasion. At other times they present the aspect of a deserted village.

After the accession of the Manchu Tartars in 1644, eight schools or colleges were established for the benefit of the eight tribes or banners into which the Tartars of Peking are divided. They were projected on a liberal scale, and affiliated to the university, their special object being to promote among the rude invaders a knowledge of Chinese letters and civilization. Each was provided with a staff of five professors, and had an attendance of one hundred and five pupils, who were encouraged by a monthly stipend and regarded as in training for the public service. The central luminary and its satellites presented at that time a brilliant and imposing spectacle.

At present, however, the system is practically abandoned, the college buildings have fallen to ruin, and not one of them is open for the instruction of youth. Nothing remains as a reminiscence of the past but a sham examination, which is held from time to time to enable the professors and students to draw their pay. Some years

ago an effort was made to resuscitate these government schools by requiring attendance once in three days, but such an outcry was raised against it that it soon fell through. Those who cared to learn could learn better at home, and those who did not care for learning would choose to dispense with their pensions rather than take the trouble of attending so frequently. So the students remain at home, and the professors enjoy their sinecures, having no serious duty to perform, excepting the worship of Confucius. The presidents of the university are even designated by a title which signifies libation-pourers, indicating that this empty ceremony is regarded as their highest function. Twice a month (*viz.*, at the new and full moon) all the professors are required to assemble in official robes, and perform nine prostrations on the flag-stones, at a respectful distance, in front of the temple.

Even this duty a pliable conscience enables them to alleviate by performing it by proxy. One member of each college appears for the rest, and after the ceremony inscribes the names of his colleagues in a ledger called the "Record of Diligence," in evidence that they were all present.

Negligent and perfunctory as they are, they are not much to be blamed; they do as much as they are paid for. Two taels per month (\$1.50), together with two suits of clothes and two bushels of rice per annum, and a fur jacket once in three years—these are their emoluments as fixed by law. Scant as the money allowance originally was, it is still further reduced by being paid in depreciated currency, and actually amounts to less than one dollar per month. The requisition for government rice is disposed of at a similar discount, the hungry professor being obliged to sell it to a broker instead of

drawing directly from the imperial storehouses. As for the clothing, there is room to suspect that it has warmed other shoulders before coming into his possession.*

Professorships, however, possess a value independent of salary. The empty title carries with it a social distinction; and the completion of a three years' term of nominal service renders a professor eligible to the post of district magistrate. These places, therefore, do not go a-begging, though their incumbents sometimes do.

In order to form a just idea of the Kuo Tze Chien, we must study its constitution. This will acquaint us with the design of its founders, and show us what it was in its prime, at the beginning of the present dynasty, or, for that matter, at the beginning of any other dynasty that has ruled China for the last three thousand years. We find it in the *Ta Ch'ing Hui Tien*, the collected statutes of the reigning dynasty; and it looks so well on paper that we cannot refrain from admiring the wisdom and liberality of the ancient worthies who planned it, however poorly its present state answers to their original conception. We find our respect for the Chinese increasing as we recede from the present; and in China, among the dust and decay of her antiquated and effete institutions, one may be excused for catching the common infection, and becoming a worshipper of antiquity.

Its officers, according to this authority, consist of a rector, who is selected from among the chief ministers of the State; two presidents and three vice-presidents, who have the grade and title of *ta jên*, or "great man," and, together with the rector, constitute the governing body; two *po shih*, or directors of instruction; two proctors; two

* These details were obtained from one of the professors, who added to his income by serving me as a scribe.

secretaries; and one librarian; these are general officers. Then come the officers of the several colleges.

There are six colleges for Chinese students, bearing the names of "Hall for the Pursuit of Wisdom," "Hall of the Sincere Heart," "Hall of True Virtue," "Hall of Noble Aspirations," "Hall of Broad Acquirements," and "Hall for the Guidance of Nature." Each of these has two regular professors, and I know not how many assistants. There are eight colleges for the Manchu Tartars, as above mentioned, each with five professors. Lastly, there is a school for the Russian language, and a school for mathematics and astronomy, each with one professor. To these we add six clerks and translators, and we have a total of seventy-one persons, constituting what we may call the corporation of the university.

As to the curriculum of studies, its literature was never expected to go beyond the thirteen classics engraved on the stones which adorn its halls; while its arts and sciences were all comprehended in the familiar "Six," which from the days of Chou, if not from those of Yao and Shun, have formed the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of the Chinese people.

It would be doing injustice to the ancients to accuse them of limiting the scientific studies of the Kuo Tze Chien by their narrow formulæ. The truth is, that, little as the ancients accomplished in this line, their modern disciples have not attempted to emulate or overtake them. In the University of Grand Cairo, it is said, no science that is more recent than the twelfth century is allowed to be taught. In that of China, the "School for the Sons of the Empire," no science whatever is taught.

This is not, however, owing to any restriction in the constitution or charter, as its terms afford sufficient scope

for expansion if the officers of the university had possessed the disposition or the capacity to avail themselves of such liberty. It is there said, for example, "As to practical arts, such as the art of war, astronomy, engraving, music, law, and the like, let the professors lead their students to the original sources and point out the defects and the merits of each author."

Is there any ground for hope that this ancient school, once an ornament to the Empire, may be renovated, remodelled and adapted to the altered circumstances of the age? The prospect, we think, is not encouraging. A traveller, on entering the city of Peking, is struck by the vast extent and skilful masonry of its sewers; but he is not less astonished at their present dilapidated condition, reeking with filth and breeding pestilence, instead of ministering to the health of the city. When these *cloacæ* are restored, and lively streams of mountain water are made to course through all their veins and arteries, then, and not till then, may this old university be reconstructed and perform a part in the renovation of the Empire.

Creation is sometimes easier than reformation. It was a conviction of this fact that led the more enlightened among the Chinese ministers some years ago to favor the establishment of a new institution for the cultivation of foreign science, rather than attempt to introduce it through any of the existing channels, such as the Kuo Tze Chien, Astronomical College, or Board of Works.

Their undertaking met with strenuous opposition from a party of bigoted conservatives, headed by Wo Jên, a member of the privy council, and tutor to his Majesty. Through his influence, mainly, the educated classes were induced to stand aloof, professing that they would be better employed in teaching the Western barbarians than in learning from them. Wo Jên scouted the idea that in

so vast an Empire there could be any want of natives qualified to give instruction in all the branches proposed to be studied.

The Emperor took him at his word, and told him to come forward with his men; and he might have *carte-blanche* for the establishment of a rival school. He declined the trial, and by way of compromise he was appointed rector of the Kuo Tze Chien—the “School for the Sons of the Empire.”

After my return to Peking in 1897, Huang, one of the Presidents, exchanged visits with me and expressed an earnest desire that something might be done to place the education of China on a new footing, but he held out no hope for the renovation of the “Old University.” The creation of a New University in the following year was the realization of a widefelt and long-cherished desire.

BOOK V

History

XX

THE STUDY OF CHINESE HISTORY

AMONG the various departments into which the literature of the Chinese is divided, that which in my opinion will best repay the attention of European scholars is their History. Yet like their venerated classic, the Book of Changes, of which they affirm that it can never be transported beyond the seas, there is reason to fear that their history is not very well adapted for exportation.

In its native form, it may find translators; but they will not find readers. Its form requires to be transformed; and its very substance to undergo a transubstantiation, in order to adapt it to the taste of our Western public. Beyond a substratum of facts, there is absolutely no part of it capable of surviving a transfer to the Western world.

In the West, the Father of History, or some of his editors, prefixed the names of the Muses to the several portions of his immortal work—indicating that the idea of beauty presided over its composition, and consecrating the “art preservative of arts” to the patronage of all the Sacred Nine.

In China, the conception of history is that of a simple record; not that of a work of art.

In one of the Taoist legends, an old man, who has tasted the elixir of immortality, is asked to tell his age. “I count it not,” he replies, “by years, but by terrestrial

cataclysms. As often as a continent sinks into the bosom of the sea, or a new world emerges from the ocean, I drop a little pebble to commemorate the occurrence. The accumulation of pebbles is now so great that they fill eleven chambers of my dwelling." Here we have an embodiment of the genius of Chinese History—not a Muse stamping on it the impress of divine beauty, but shrivelled age like that of Tithonus, or the wandering Jew, preserving a monotonous record of the changes that occur in the course of an endless life.

The accumulation of counters set forth in this legend is an expressive emblem of the vastness of China's historic treasure. In this respect, as Hegel has remarked in his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, there is a striking contrast between the two great empires of Asia—the Chinese having a historical literature more voluminous than that of any other nation on earth, and the Hindus none at all. The explanation of this phenomenon, if we seek for one, will be found in the fact that history is the expression of national life—a tissue resembling that of a living organism knitting the past and present into a substantial unity. Their historical literature, accordingly, more than anything else, unless it be their educational system, affords an index of the greatness of the Chinese people. With them the worship of ancestors is an expression of their sense of solidarity; and history a testament, by which they convey to posterity the legacy of the past.

The precautions which they take to secure and to transmit the record betoken a proud consciousness that the current of their national life is too strong to be swallowed up by the shifting sands of time. That record, though it extends to the people, starts from the throne as its centre, and no less than four bureaus or colleges, each presided over by learned members of the Hanlin, are

charged with collecting and elaborating materials for the history of each reign and its nearest predecessors. They are the Bureau of Daily Record, the Bureau of Contemporary History; the Bureau of Dynastic History; the Bureau of Military History. This last, as its name implies, occupies itself with wars foreign or domestic. The Bureau of Daily Record has its representatives always at the side of His Imperial Majesty. Whether in his palace or on a journey, or in so-called retirement, he can no more escape the eye of these official spies than Horace's trooper could outrun the tormentor that mounted behind him.

Here is a paragraph from the instructions to the officers of this bureau. In respect to laborious minuteness it may be taken as a sample of the working of all these colleges:

"They (the scribes) are to take note of the down-sitting and up-rising of His Majesty; and to keep a record of every word or action. They are to attend His Majesty when he holds court and gives audience; when he visits the Altar of Heaven, the Temple of Ancestors; when he holds a Feast of the Classics, or plows the Sacred Field; when he inspects the schools, or reviews the troops; when he bestows entertainments, celebrates a military triumph, or decides the fate of criminals. They must follow the Emperor in his hunting excursions; and during his sojourn at his country palace. They will hear the Imperial voice with reverence and note its utterances with care; appending to every entry the date and the name of the writer. At the end of every month these records shall be sealed up and deposited in a desk; and at the close of the year they shall be transferred to the custody of the Privy Council.

The Emperor's public acts and public documents constitute the province of the *Shih Lu Kuan*, the Bureau

of Contemporary History. The *Kuo Shih Kuan*, or Bureau of Dynastic History, occupies itself with the archives of the ruling house, and the biographies of those who are supposed to have shed lustre on its reign.

These tribunals form an essential part of the machinery of government, supplying a check on the extravagance of irresponsible power where no other would be available—the dread of being held up to the execration of posterity operating quite as effectually as the remonstrances of a board of censors. The censors are still called by a title "*Yü Shih*" which means official historian; and, though no longer employed in the production of history, they are wont to draw their weightiest arguments from the history of the past, and to make their most solemn appeals to the history of the future.

In the palmy days of Chou, when the institutions of the empire were in their infancy, a prince proposed to make an excursion which had for its object nothing better nor worse than his own amusement. One of the censors, after vainly employing other arguments to dissuade him from his undertaking, solemnly admonished him that all his movements were matters of history. The poor prince, startled at the thought that to him there could be nothing trivial—that his every act was exposed to the "fierce light that beats upon a throne"—heaved a sigh of regret, and desisted from his innocent purpose,—that of fishing on a neighboring lake.

In those days the historian was as stern and inflexible as the Roman *Censor morum*. In the sixth century before our era, there lived in Shantung a General, or *Maire du Palais*, named Ts'ui Wu Tze. Herod-like, he took possession of the wife of another; his sovereign in turn deprived him of the fascinating beauty. The General in revenge killed the Prince; and, when the Court Chronicler

put on record this chapter of infamies, the General put him to death, and tore the leaf from the Archives of State. A brother of the historian renewed the record, and suffered death for doing so. A leaf was again torn out, and a third brother presented himself, pen in hand, to repeat the tale and seal it with his blood. The tyrant, touched by his martyr-like boldness, spared his life, and submitted to the stigma. The incident is handed down as a proof of the unflinching fidelity of ancient historians, and by consequence of the trustworthiness of their narratives.

In later times, the chroniclers were not so fearless. One, Ch'ên Lin, a man of talent, being reproached by Ts'ao Ts'ao for drawing his portrait in rather sombre colors, replied, while he trembled for his life—"Your Highness will forgive me. I was then detained in the camp of your enemy, where I had no more freedom of choice than the arrow shot from his cross-bow."

Thackeray says of his pen:

"It never writ a flattery,
Nor signed the page that registered a lie."

With Chinese historians, fear and flattery are influences which, more than any others, are liable to deflect their needle from the pole. To guard against these two sources of error, the notes of every day are dropped into an iron chest, which is not to be opened until after the death of the reigning prince. Yet this provision is not always effectual; flattery which, addressed to the living, would be deemed gross and disgusting, falls like music on the ears of their mourning relatives. Hence it was that Octavia paid Virgil so magnificently for his lines on the dead Marcellus; hence too, at the close of the last reign, the Empress mother welcomed with delight a pane-

gyric on the late Emperor, which made a debauched weakling appear as a star of the first magnitude. Was not the Roman Senate accustomed, by solemn vote, to raise deceased emperors to the skies, whenever their relations succeeded to the throne? The writers of China are neither more nor less truthful than the Romans; and now and then we meet among them with an instance of fidelity worthy of Rome's best days: e. g., Wu K'ò Tu, a Censor (his Chinese title means historian), some years ago protested against the affiliation of the present Emperor to Hsien Fêng as an arrangement that leaves his predecessor without the solace of a son to sacrifice to his manes. In order to give more weight to his remonstrance he committed suicide at the tomb of the sovereign whose cause he was seeking to serve. Does not this modern instance almost suffice to render credible the story of the martyr Chroniclers of whom we have spoken?

*Incedis per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso;*

said Horace to Pollio, when the latter was proposing to write the history of the then recent revolution. Nobody knows better than the Chinese the treacherous thinness of the crust that overlies the lava of a dynastic eruption. With a view to guarding against the perverting influence of fear and favour, they accordingly wait until the last scion of an imperial house has ceased to reign before compiling, or rather before publishing, the history of a dynasty. The history of the Mings was not published until after the accession of the Manchus; and the commission charged with its preparation, devoted no less than forty-six years to the task. Official histories are always corrected by collation with private memoirs, which only wait the sunset of a dynasty to come forth in

countless numbers and shed their glow-worm light on the events of the period.

In addition to these ordinary arrangements, there exists an extraordinary provision for purifying the stream of history. It consists in the appearance, at long intervals, of sages with a divine commission to revise the annals of preceding centuries, and to post up the doom's-day book of the empire. Four have appeared already, viz. :—

Confucius, in the 6th century, B. C. ;

Sze Ma Ch'ien, in the 2nd century, B. C. ;

Sze Ma Kuang, in the 11th century, A. D. ;

Chu Futze, a century later.

For the advent of the fifth, the world is now on tiptoe.

Each revision reduces, of course, the quantity of material; but, after all their sifting, there still remains an enormous irreducible mass, in which the dead past is buried rather than illustrated.

The historical works of the first of these great editors, as expounded by his disciples, extend to 60 books, or about 20 volumes. Those of the second, to 130 books. Those of the third reach the portentous figure of 360. And those of the last, though professing to be an abridgment, amount to 55 books.

The twenty-four dynastic histories, taken together, foot up the tremendous total of 3,266 books, or 1,633 separate volumes.

This is sufficiently appalling, but what shall we say of the mountains of undigested ores that have not been subjected to the fires of the smelting furnace? It may help us to form an idea of the extent of these crude treasures to mention that the history of the last short reign of only thirteen years is spread over no fewer than one hundred and fifty volumes. Then there are collateral histories for that period, which are also official, such as that of the

Taiping rebellion in 211 volumes; that of the Nienfei rebellion in 160 volumes; and those of the three several Mohammedan rebellions of Kashgar, Kansu, and Yünnan, not yet finished, but certainly far more voluminous. If the preceding reigns were only half as prolific in historical writings, the productions of the present dynasty would alone more than suffice to fill the library of the sea-side genius, to say nothing of the twenty-four preceding dynasties.

Nor is this all. To complete the Catalogue, we have still to add topographical histories without number. Each of the nineteen old Provinces has its official history compiled by a commission presided over by officers of the Hanlin. Each department or prefecture has likewise its proper history; and this gives us 200 more—not volumes, but works; while, descending to cities of the third order, we must reckon a history of from ten to twenty volumes for each of nearly two thousand districts. The sum total makes a quantity so vast that the mind can no more grasp it than it can conceive the distances to the fixed stars. We seek in vain for a unit of measure. If the manuscripts of the Alexandrian library kept the fires of the Caliph Omar blazing for three months, how long might the histories of China supply them with fuel! Tamerlane was in the habit of building pyramids of the skulls of his enemies. How high a pyramid, we may ask, might be constructed out of these dry bones of past ages?

In the presence of these enormous accumulations, the question arises what estimate are we to form of their value?

Of their value to the Chinese there is no question. Their existence is proof of the esteem in which they are held; and the manner in which every species of composition bristles with historical allusions bears witness to

the influence they have exerted on the mind of the Chinese. But are these venerable remains of any value to us? If so, in what way may they be made to contribute to the literary wealth of the Western world?

In forming an estimate, we must not forget that our standard of value in the criticism of such works differs as widely from that of the Chinese as a golden sovereign does from the cheap productions of the native mint. Ours was coined and stamped for us by no meaner hand than that of Lord Bacon, who defines history as "Philosophy teaching by example." It is philosophy, not science, for its data are too indefinite to be made a basis for scientific deductions. Philosophy lays no claim to absolute certainty, though her very name proclaims her a searcher after truth. Her first object is to learn; her second to teach; and if, in the domain of history, she is able to draw lessons from the past, it is because she has first learned the meaning of those great movements which she professes to expound.

Judged by this standard, the Chinese have chroniclers, but not historians. Their chronicles are composed with studied elegance and abound in acute criticism of character and events; but the whole range of their literature contains nothing that can be called a Philosophy of History. They have no Hegel, who, after reconstructing the universe, applies his principles to explain the laws of human progress; no Gibbon or Montesquieu to trace the decay of an old civilization; no Guizot or Lecky to sketch the rise of a new one. They have not even a Thucydides or a Tacitus, who can follow effects up to causes, and paint the panorama of an epoch.

The reason is obvious. Without resorting to the supposition that they are by nature deficient in the philosophic faculty, we find a sufficient explanation of the

phenomenon in the faulty model set for them by the greatest of their sages.

With them Confucius, not Sze Ma Ch'ien, is the Father of History. His famous *Spring and Autumn* is not even a book of Annals. It is a diary in which all events, great and small, are strung like beads on a calendar of days. This method, not to speak of the extreme conciseness of his style, makes it difficult for his reader to perceive the connection of events. Three disciples of his school have come to his aid with commentaries; but all of them follow the order of the text, chapter and verse. His continuators have done the same; and so have all his successors down to our historiographers of the Hanlin, who keep their daily journals and imagine they are writing history.

To have so many pens laboriously employed in taking notes is a good way to collect materials; but those materials require a different kind of elaboration from any they have ever received at the hands of a native author before they become History, in our acceptance of the term.

That their History has remained in the rudimentary condition in which it began its career is one more instance, in addition to many others, of noble arts which the Chinese originated in ancient times; and which remained ever after in a state of arrested development.

There are men, says Sir Lyon Playfair, who "cannot see a forest for the trees of which it is composed."

So the Chinese chronicler, bent on classifying all occurrences in the order of time, fails to perceive the trend of colossal movements that sweep over whole nations and long centuries. His work in keeping the minutes of the day is History only in the sense in which the daily noting of the stars is Astronomy. Thousands of diligent observers had recorded their observations with apparently

fruitless toil, when the eye of Kepler, sweeping over the mass of facts, deduced from them the ellipticity of the planetary orbits. May we not hope that some master mind will yet arise, who shall be capable of pointing out the reign of law in this limbo of undigested facts?

The historian, who shall do this for China, will be a native; but, in addition to the culture of the Hanlin, he must possess the training of a Western university. The students of history, trained in the native schools, are all near-sighted. They analyze, with more than microscopic penetration, particular events and personal character; but they are utterly incapable of broad synthetic combinations.

In proof of this, I may point to three immense movements, each of which is as indispensable to the understanding of the present condition of China as are Kepler's three laws to the explanation of the solar system. Yet no native writer appears to have grasped the significance, or even formed a conception, of any one of them. They are:

- 1.—The conquest of China by the Chinese;
- 2.—The conquest of China by the Tartars;
- 3.—The struggle between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the empire.

To the mind of a native, the assertion that China has been conquered by the Chinese would be tantamount to that venerable item of political news that "the Dutch have taken Holland." To him, they have always been in possession, and, so far as he knows, they sprang directly from the soil. But the eye of a foreign scholar, trained to trace the origin of nations, perceives at a glance that the Chinese were a foreign race, who, clothed with the power of a higher civilization, undertook the conquest of the

water-shed of eastern Asia, about the time the Aryan Hindus undertook that of the southern Peninsula. He notes the first seats of their power along the banks of the Yellow River, indicating that they came from the North-west, and followed its course down into the central plain. Whence they came, he may not be able to affirm with certainty; but he finds two-thirds of the empire, even in the classic age of Chou, still in possession of savage tribes, who must be regarded as the true autochthones.

He sees these gradually absorbed and assimilated by the superior race, until the remnants of the aborigines are driven into mountain fastnesses, where they still maintain their independence, and where the conflict of ages is still going on. The first chapter in the history of this conflict is found in the brief account which the *Shu Ching* gives us of the subjugation of the *San Miao*, "The three aboriginal tribes," by the Emperor Shun.

The last is not yet written; but a page still wet with blood records the subjection of the Miao Tze of Kuei Chou, and the extension of Japanese sway in the island of Formosa. What a theme for the pen of a native scholar, if he could only enlarge the range of his mental vision so as to take in a movement of such magnitude!

The second of the three great movements is, in its origin, almost co-eval with the first, and runs parallel with it through all the ages down to the present day. To the mind of a native, the Tartar conquest suggests only the successful invasion of the Manchus, the now dominant race. To the wider survey of a western thinker, it signifies a persistent attempt, extending through thousands of years, made by barbarians of whatever name on the North of China, to gain possession of a country made rich by the industry of its civilized inhabitants.

Its first stage was an advance into the interior, in 771 B. C., far enough to destroy the western capital, near the site of the present Hsi An Fu. The Emperor and his consort perishing in the ruins, the successor of the unfortunate monarch removed his court eastward, to a safer situation, in the heart of the Empire. At a later period, Lo Yang, the eastern capital, was also sacked by Tartars. Still later (not to follow the fluctuations of the conflict), when the northern half of the Empire was over-run, the court retired from the banks of the Huang Ho to those of the Yang Tze Chiang; whence it removed still further south,* in the vain hope of escaping the Tartars, who, under the leadership of Kublai, effected for the first time the conquest of the whole Empire.

After a brief tenure, they lost their grand prize, but it was reconquered by the Manchus; and for two centuries and a half it has remained in their possession.

The Great Wall, stretching from the sea to the desert of Kansu, is a monument of this undying struggle, which, from its first inception, has been essentially one long war, with only here and there a fitful truce.

The successive sackings of Rome by Gaul and Vandal; the conquest of Italy by Barbarians from the North; and the removal of the capital to the East, are parallels that offer themselves to a European student, and suggest a law in the tide of nations, viz,—that the hungry hordes of the North manifest, in all ages, a tendency to encroach on opulent regions more favored by the sun.

In all ages, the Tartar invaders have yielded to the influence of a higher civilization; but, on the other hand, they have made a deep impression, ethnologically as well as politically, on the state of China.

The Chinese have treated this subject only in a frag-

* To Hang Chou.

mentary way; but, taken as a whole, in its philosophy and its poetry, the conquest of China by the Tartars would supply the Muse of History with another of her noblest themes.

The two great movements, which I have now so hastily sketched, were conflicts of races; the third was a conflict of principles. The contending forces were those of feudal autonomy and centralization. At the dawn of the Chou dynasty, not to go further back in the history, an able monarch succeeded in holding the vassal Princes in check; while, under his weak successors, they threw off all but the semblance of subjection. This struggle for power went on for eight centuries, until both combatants were overwhelmed by a new foe, who had grown strong in conflict with the Tartars of the North!

In this signal event, Chinese historians discern nothing but the triumph of vulgar ambition; and they paint its author in the darkest colors, as an impious tyrant who burned the books of Confucius, and slaughtered his disciples. For such unheard-of cruelty, they find no better explanation than a partiality of Taoism, coupled with a desire to destroy the records of the past, in order that he might appear to posterity as the author of a new era. Not one of them has understood the significance of *Shih Huang Ti*, the august title by which he proclaimed himself the "first" of a new order of "autocratic sovereigns." Not one of them has perceived that his motive for burning the books of Confucius was to obliterate the feudal system from the memory of China; and that he cut the throats of the Literati to make sure that those books and their political doctrines should never re-appear.

The books did re-appear; but the feudal system, once buried in the sepulchre of the slaughtered scholars, has had no resurrection. It had been to China the fruitful

mother of ages of anarchy. Since then she has gone through many revolutions; but, thanks to the genius of Shih Huang Ti, she has witnessed no repetition of the sad spectacle of a family of States waging perpetual war. His system of centralized power remains the bond of the Empire; and the title of Huang Ti, which he was the "first" to assume, still survives as its permanent expression.

This conflict, between the centripetal and centrifugal forces, forms the third great subject,* which the old historians have not comprehended, and which waits the advent of a writer of deeper insight and more comprehensive grasp. May not some future Hallam show the world that Feudalism, which formed such a conspicuous stage in the development of modern Europe, has played an equally prominent part in the History of China?

Is it objected that, unhappily for the study of Chinese history, its theatre is too remote to awaken public interest in any high degree? Egypt and Babylon are remote in one sense, but they are not altogether alien. They are only higher up on the stream that expands into the broad current of our western civilization. Ancient India is remote; but it forms a part of the same ethnic system with ourselves, and, on that account, appeals powerfully to the imagination of the European. Chinese history forms a stream apart, which has not, it is said, in any way affected the state of the western world.

But is it true that the two streams have flowed down through the tracts of time in complete independence of each other? Are they not like those ocean currents which bear life and beauty respectively to the Eastern shores of the Atlantic, and to those of the Pacific? The

* The following chapters throw light on two of them.

Gulf-stream and the Kurosiwo, though flowing through opposite hemispheres, are not indifferent to each other. They are connected by the pulsations of a common tide. So the civilizations of China and Europe, however widely separated, have each derived from the other influences as real, though occult, as those that throb in the bosom of the ocean. To discover their points of contact, and to exhibit the proofs of mutual reaction, are among the most interesting problems offered to the student of Chinese history.

That the mutual influence of the two civilizations will in the future be far greater than it has ever been in the past, it is easy to foresee. When China, developing the resources of her magnificent domain, and clothing herself with the panoply of modern science, becomes, as she must in the lapse of a century or two, one of the three or four great powers that divide the dominion of the globe, think you that the world will continue to be indifferent to the past of her history? Not merely will some knowledge of her history be deemed indispensable to a liberal education;—while I am in the spirit of prophecy, I may as well go on to predict that her language and literature will be studied in all our Universities.

But why should the degree of our interest in any field of intellectual investigation be measured by the extent of our commercial intercourse? If the Chinese, instead of living on a globe, the dominion of which they are certain to dispute with our posterity,—were looking serenely down upon us from the surface of the moon, would that be any reason why we should feel no concern for their fortunes? If, by means of some kind of *selenograph* yet to be invented, the moon could convey to us the lessons of experience evolved by such a people in the

course of their existence, would she not be giving us something more substantial than moon-shine?

Of history it may be said, as of fame—

“All that we know of it, begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes and friends.”

To men of science, however, a well authenticated statistical history ought to be welcome, even if it came from the remotest limb of the Universe. The archives of China do not indeed supply us with tabular statements, such as would satisfy the demands of Buckle and Quatrefages, but they give us the nearest approach to these that it is possible to obtain from distant periods of time.

In our modern observatories, the sun is made to take his daily photograph! If we possessed an unbroken series of such pictures, extending back for some thousands of years, what an invaluable aid it would afford towards ascertaining the laws that prevail in that far-off world! Now, to the Chinese chronicler, the emperor is the sun, and he has no other object in writing than to give us his master's daily picture. Happily, other subjects are brought in as accessories that are of more interest to us than the person of the sovereign. The territory is described as his hereditary or acquired estate; the people come into view as his praedial slaves; the signs of heaven,—sun-spots, star-showers, and eclipses, all so precious to the man of science,—are recorded as shadows on the dial of imperial destiny. Casting a hasty glance back over the long concatenation, we are struck by the fact that Chinese society is far from presenting an aspect of changeless uniformity. Nor have its changes been as monotonous as those registered by our sea-side watcher. The

men have not always worn the bald badge of subjection to a foreign yoke; nor have the women, from time immemorial, hobbled about on crippled feet. Time was when the gods, that greet us at every corner, had not yet made their advent; when books, ink, and paper, were unknown (but our historians were even then taking notes, for it is they that tell us); and when China was confined to a small angle of the present empire, the rest being occupied by savage races. In those primitive days, even the face of nature was different, The hills were covered with forest, the plains with jungle, and the lowlands with reedy marshes abounding in ferocious beasts.

Numerous as have been the changes through which the Chinese people have passed, they have not been always treading in a vicious circle. History shows them to have made a general, if not a regular, advance in all that constitutes the greatness of a people; so that, in the 76th cycle of their chronology, their domain is more extended, their numbers greater, and their intelligence higher, than at any preceding epoch in the forty centuries of their national existence.

We shall find too that their progress through the ages has been, amid all their fluctuations, confined within the lines of a fixed and well-defined social organization. In the state, a *jure divino* monarchy has, in all ages, formed the nucleus of the government; and the supremacy of letters has been secured by making learning the passport to office. In the family, the kindred principles of unlimited subjection to living parents, and of devout worship to dead ancestors, appear of equal antiquity. These four are the corner-stones on which the social fabric reposes at the present day.

To those who have the language and the leisure to enable them to explore its original sources, I would com-

mend the study of Chinese History as alike attractive and profitable. With these two conditions, we have access to masses of historic lore, which we may compare, not with virgin mines, but with those heaps of silver slag left by the old Greeks at the mines of Laurium, from which the Germans are now extracting quantities of the precious metal that escaped the cruder methods of the ancients. Or, to vary the figure, we may liken them to the walls of the Coliseum, out of which the mediæval pontiffs quarried stones to build the churches of Rome. But a history worthy of the grandeur of the subject cannot be produced otherwise than by the combined labors of many scholars.

NOTE

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE LEADING DYNASTIES will help to elucidate the references in this and the following chapters. A sketch of history may be found in *Cycle of Cathay*, pp. 251-264.

1. Period of the Five Rulers, B. C. 2852-2205. Society emerges from barbarism. Letters are invented, followed by arithmetic and chronology.

The last two rulers, Yao and Shun, are models of every princely virtue. Dominated by love of the people, each rejects his own son as unworthy to reign, and adopts a capable successor. This is the golden age, when the interests of the people rose above those of the reigning house. The events of this period are largely legendary.

2. The Hsia dynasty, B. C. 2205-1766. A calendar of days and rites has come down from this epoch which shows that social and political institutions were becoming crystallized into permanent forms. The whole of China had previously been occupied by savage tribes; but the

northern half was now brought under the sway of the Chinese rule. *Hsia* signifies summer; and China is still called the "summer land."

3. The dynasty of Shang, B. C. 1766-1122. Shang signifies merchant. It perhaps indicates that with growing refinement of manners, commerce became a conspicuous factor in social life. The empire was subdivided among vassal States; and the feudal system of government took definite shape.

4. The Chou (round, or complete) dynasty, B. C. 1122-255. Literature rose and sages appeared. Confucius was born B. C. 551, and Laotze, founder of the Taoist school, a little earlier. Civilization, as the Chinese think, then attained its acme, and to this day they remain under the domination of the rules and ideals of that period.

5. The Ch'in dynasty, B. C. 255-206. The Ch'ins swept away the vassal States, unified the empire and gave it the name of China. The Great Wall is their enduring monument; but they earned the execration of all ages by burning the books of Confucius and slaughtering his followers.

6. The Han dynasty, B. C. 206-A. D. 220. Marked by resurrection of Confucian books and revival of letters; introduction of Buddhism and completion of the triad of religions; also by extension of the Empire to the bounds of China Proper. In honor of these brilliant achievements, the people call themselves the "Sons of Han."

7. Numerous partial or short-lived dynasties, A. D. 220-618. A time of division, war and anarchy; these four centuries are not distinguished by any conspicuous step in the march of progress. During the greater part the tendency was to relapse into barbarism. The wars of

the Three Kingdoms, with which the period opens, were fertile in heroes. One was K'uang Fu, the God of War. It was preeminently the heroic age.

8. The dynasty of T'ang, A. D. 618-905. In letters, the age of poetry; noted for the rise of the drama and the formation of the Hanlin Academy, this period is still more celebrated for the invention of printing, and the diffusion of knowledge. The unsteady hold on the Southern provinces was now confirmed so that the people of that region call themselves to this day the "Men of T'ang."

9. The Wu Tai or "Five Dynasties," A. D. 907-960.

10. The Sung Dynasty, A. D. 960-1278. Noted for the rise of speculative philosophy; and the fixing of the interpretation of the Confucian classics. A school of acute thinkers, beginning with Chao and Chang, culminates after more than a century in Chu Futze, who is also the Coryphaeus of Chinese Commentators. They show signs of having felt the stimulus of Indian thought, but decline to adopt anything foreign. They have become the standard of orthodoxy in both their philosophy and their hermeneutics. A third thing was added to complete the yoke of authority, viz.: the reorganization of the civil service examination system on its present basis.

11. The Yuan or Mongol dynasty, A. D. 1260-1368. The Tartars, who from time to time had seized portions of China, now established their sway over the whole empire under the famous Kublai Khan. Under his reign the Venetian, Marco Polo, lived in China and gave the earliest detailed description of the country, calling it Cathay, as the Mongols do.

12. The Ming dynasty, A. D. 1368-1644. This period is not remarkable for any intellectual movement except the

steady growth of an already enormous literature, the compilation of encyclopædias and the codification of the Laws.

13. The Ta Ch'ing or Great Pure Dynasty, A. D. 1644 to the present time. The Manchu Tartars, a small tribe in Liaotung, gradually got possession of that outlying colony, and with it acquired the civilization of China. The Mings having succumbed to internal revolt, they were invited to aid in restoring order, and did so by seating their own princes on the throne.

Rivalling the house of Kublai in the extent of their dominions, they have surpassed all preceding dynasties in the ability and merit of the rulers they have given the celestial empire. Theirs has been, on the whole, the wisest government that China has ever enjoyed. How much longer their lease of power has to run must depend on the degree to which they assimilate the principles, arts and methods of Western Christendom. Under the Manchus, Christianity has acquired a firm foothold in China, and science, which came with it, is a powerful auxiliary in carrying forward the intellectual conquest.

XXI

THE TARTARS IN ANCIENT CHINA *

THE Great Wall, which forms the northern boundary of China proper, tells of a conflict of races. Extending for fifteen hundred miles along the verge of the Mongolian plateau, it presents itself to the mind as a geographical feature, boldly marked on the surface of the globe. Winding like a huge serpent over the crests of the mountains, it seems (to adapt the words of Emerson) as if—

“O'er China's Great Wall bent the sky
As on its friend with kindred eye,
And granted it an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.”

It divides two stages of civilization to-day, as it did two thousand years ago. On one side are vast plains unbroken by the plough, and occupied only by tribes of wandering nomads; on the other are fields and gardens, rich with the products of agricultural industry. Between the two, a state of perpetual hostility is inevitable, unless restrained by the power of some overshadowing government. This natural antagonism has never failed to show itself at every point of contact, the world over. Schiller

* The name Tartar is incapable of precise definition. It is applied in a general sense to all the wandering tribes of the North and West.

hints—not in his poems, but in a course of historical lectures—that this endless strife of shepherd and cultivator was foreshadowed in the conflict of Cain and Abel. History, unhappily, supplies us with an abundance of illustrations. Egypt fell a prey to the shepherd kings; and in Asia, as in Europe, the inhospitable North has always been ready to disgorge its predatory hordes on lands more favored by the sun.

The Chinese of the border provinces were in the earlier ages compelled to divide their time between war and work, under pain of losing the fruits of their labors. Like the pioneers of the Western continent, they never allowed themselves to be parted from their defensive weapons, and enjoyed life itself only at the price of perpetual vigilance. Experience proved that a line of military posts, no matter how closely they might be linked together, afforded no adequate security against the incursions of homeless wanderers. The Great Wall was built, not as a substitute for such posts, but as a supplement to them. That it served its end, there can be no reasonable doubt. So effectually indeed did it protect the peaceful tillers of the soil, that an ancient saying describes it as the ruin of one generation and the salvation of thousands.

From time to time, however, the spirit of rapine, swelling into the lust of conquest, has swept over the huge barrier, as an earthquake wave sweeps over the artificial defenses of a seaport—or found means to open its gates. Twice has the whole of China succumbed to a flood of extra-mural invaders:—The Mongols, under Genghis Khan, were aided in passing the Great Wall in the province of Shansi by the treachery of Alakush, a Tartar chief, whose duty it was to defend it; and the Manchus, who are now in possession of the throne, entered at its

eastern extremity, on the invitation of Wu San Kuei, a Chinese general, who sought their aid against a rebel who had subverted the throne of the Mings.

Besides the three and a half centuries of Tartar domination under these two great dynasties, we find, prior to the first of them, three periods of partial conquest. From 907 to 1234 A. D., a large portion of the northern belt of provinces passed successively under the sway of the Ch'i Tan and Nü Chên* Tartar; from 386 to 532, an extensive region was subjected to the Tartar hordes of Topa, under the dynastic title of Pei Wei. How or where these invaders passed the barrier, it is not worth while to inquire. The foregoing examples show that, in a time of anarchy, some friend or ally can always be found to open the gates. *Chung chih ch'êng ch'êng*, says a Chinese proverb, "Union of hearts is the best bulwark." Without exaggerating the strength of the Great Wall, which, through a large part of its extent, is far from being the imposing structure which we see in the vicinity of Peking, we may still affirm, in the light of history, that, had it been backed by forces untainted by treason and unweakened by faction, it might have proved sufficient to shield the country from conquest. Wanting these conditions, the wall was powerless for defense; and, notwithstanding its watch towers and garrisons, we have before us the astounding fact that the Chinese of the northern provinces have passed seven, out of the last fifteen centuries, under the yoke of Tartar conquerors.

Ascending the stream of history to the dynasty of Han, which ruled China from 202 B. C. to 220 A. D., i. e., for more than four centuries, we find ourselves in pres-

* Nü Chên or Ju Chih—also called Chin Tartars. The Manchus claim them as their ancestors, the reigning house having *Aischin* (gold) for its family name.

ence of the same conflict. The names of the opposing parties are changed; but the parties remain, and the war goes on. The empire is not conquered by the foreign foe; but it is kept in a state of perpetual terror, by an assemblage of powerful tribes who bear the collective name of Hsiang Nu. Bretschneider says they were Mongols *nomine mutato*; Howorth, in his learned *History of the Mongols*, pronounces them Turks, or more properly Turcomans, the ancestors of the present occupants of Khiva, Bokhara, and Constantinople. From the resemblance of this name to *Hunni*, they were formerly supposed to be the progenitors of the Magyars. So strong indeed was this conviction that, a good many years ago, a follower of Louis Kossuth went to China in search of his "kindred according to the flesh;" actuated apparently by the hope of inducing them to repeat the invasion of Europe, and deliver their brethren from the yoke of the Hapsburgs!

The numerous tribes occupying the vast region extending from Lake Balkash to the mouth of the Amur—diverse in language, but similar in nomadic habits—were in the Han period combined under the hegemony of the Hsiang Nu, forming a confederation, or an empire, rather than a single state. The chief was styled in his own language *Shan Yu*, a word which the Chinese historians explain as equivalent to *Huang Ti*; and there can be no doubt that the haughty emperors of the family of Han were compelled to accord the sacred title to their barbarous rivals. In recent times, their successors (more properly successors of the Shan Yu) have hesitated to concede it to the sovereign of at least one European empire. During the negotiation of the Austro-Hungarian treaty, the Chinese Ministers objected so strenuously to the assumption of *Huang Ti*, that the heir to a long line of Kaisers had to content himself with the first syllable of

the title, on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread." Had his minister been well versed in Chinese history what an advantage he might have gained! For, in China, a precedent is good for more than two thousand years; and the supposed connection of the Huns and Hsiang Nu, though not admitted by ethnology, is, or was, sufficiently reliable for the purposes of diplomacy.

During the Han and succeeding dynasties, the Hsiang Nu were held in check mostly by force of arms; but the weaker emperors, like those of Rome, were accustomed to send their sisters and daughters across the frontier, instead of generals; flattering the vanity of the barbarians, and replacing military armaments by the sentimentalities of family alliance. The incidents connected with these transactions have supplied rich materials for poetry and romance. A popular tragedy is founded on the fortunes of Chao Ch'ün, one of the many fair ladies who were offered as victims to preserve the peace of the borders. The Khan of Tartary, hearing of her beauty, demanded her in marriage. The Emperor refused to surrender the chief jewel of his harem; so the Khan invaded China with an overwhelming force, but he retired to his own dominions when the lady was sent to his camp. Arrived at the banks of the Amur, she threw herself into its dark waters, rather than endure a life of exile at a barbarian court. The wars of those times would furnish materials for a thrilling history. The battle-ground was sometimes on the south of the Great Wall, but generally in the steppes and deserts beyond.

As illustrations of the varying fortunes attending the wars of the Hans and the Hsiang Nu, we may mention the names of Li Kuang, Li Ling, Sze Ma Ch'ien, and Su Wu. The first of these led the armies of his sovereign

against the Hsiang Nu for many years, in the latter part of the second century B. C. He had, it is said, come off victorious in seventy battles, when, in a final conflict, disappointed in his expectation of capturing the Khan, he committed suicide on the field of battle, though, if we may believe the record, that battle was also a victory. This gives us a glimpse of the style of Hsiang Nu warfare. They were like the Parthians, "most to be dreaded when in flight." That a General, contending with such a foe, should destroy himself from chagrin at the results of his seventy-first victory, affords us a fair criterion for estimating the value of the other seventy.

Li Ling, the son (or grandson) of the ill-fated Li Kuang, appears to have been born under still less auspicious stars. Appointed to succeed his father, he suffered himself to pursue the flying enemy too hotly, when, falling into an ambuscade, his vanguard, consisting of a division of five thousand men, was cut to pieces before the main body could come to the rescue. Li Ling, with a few survivors, surrendered at discretion. His life was spared; but, to take his own description, it was little better than a living death. In addition to the privations incident to a state of captivity among savage foes, he had the bitter reflection that, on account of his supposed treachery, his nearer relations had all been put to death; and that a noble friend, who had guaranteed his fidelity, had been subjected to an ignominious punishment.

That noble friend was no other than the great historian, Sze Ma Ch'ien. Required by a cruel decree to pay the forfeit of Li Ling's alleged treachery, the historian chose to submit to a disgraceful mutilation,* rather than lose his life; not, as he himself says, that he held life dear

* He had, however, become a father prior to this disgrace.

or feared death, but solely to gain a few years for the completion of his life task, a debt which he owed to posterity. He lived to place the last stone on his own imperishable monument; and for twenty centuries he has had among his countrymen a name "better than that of sons and of daughters."

Su Wu, the last of the four unfortunates, was a diplomatic envoy. Having, while at the court of the Grand Khan, attempted by undiplomatic means to compass the destruction of an enemy, he was thrown into prison, and detained in captivity for nineteen years. A tender poem is extant, which he addressed to his wife on parting, at the commencement of his perilous mission. Whether she survived to welcome his return, we are not informed; but, in that case, she must have died with grief, to see him accompanied by a Tartar wife.

We cannot pause longer among the romantic episodes so thickly scattered through the literature of the Hans. We must travel back another thousand years, to arrive at the last and the principal division of our subject,—the Tartar Tribes in Ancient China.

We find ourselves at the rise of the third dynasty, the famous dynasty of Chou, which occupied the throne for over eight hundred years (1122 B. C. to 255 B. C.). We are at the dawn of letters; at the dividing line which separates the legendary from the historical period. The Great Wall has no existence, but the hostile tribes are there;—not Manchu or Mongol, not Hsiang Nu, Hui Ku, or T'u Chüeh, but the ancestors of all of them, under different names, hovering, like birds of prey, on the unprotected frontiers of a rich and tempting country. At this epoch, the Chinese people, who had originated somewhere in Central Asia, were few in number, and occupied a territory of comparatively limited extent. They were dis-

tinguished from their neighbors chiefly by a knowledge of letters, and by the possession of a higher civilization. This incipient culture gave them an immense advantage over the barbarous tribes who surrounded them on every side and opposed their progress. These tribes are grouped under several comprehensive terms:—those on the east are called Yi; those on the north, Ti; those on the west, Jung or Ch'iang; and those on the south, Man. The original sense of these names as expressed in picture writing, seems to be as follows:—The Yi were famous archers, and were so called from their “great bows.” The northerners used dogs in hunting and herding, and depended on fire to temper the cold of their rigorous winters; “dog” and “fire” are therefore combined in the ideograph by which the Ti are designated. The Jung were armed with spears, and this their weapon furnished the symbol for their ideograph. The ideograph Ch'iang is made up of the head of a goat and the legs of a man, and so denotes to the Chinese imagination hideous monsters, the reverse of the Greek conception of Pan and the Satyrs; it means “goat-men,” “goat-herds,” or “shepherds,” and identifies them essentially with the Ti, or dog-using nomads of the north. The character for Man combines those for “worm” and “silk,” and implies that the barbarians of the south, even at that early day, were not ignorant of silk-culture.

These names and characters all became more or less expressive of contempt, but were without doubt less offensive in their original sense. Marco Polo, who followed the Tartar usage, applies the word Man, in the form Manzi (or Montsi) to the whole of the Chinese people. They were so called as being “southrons” with respect to the people of Mongolia, and at the same time objects of contempt to their conquerors.

All the tribes of the south and the east, i. e. the Man and the Yi, save certain aborigines called Miao, were conquered and gradually absorbed and assimilated by the vigorous race whose progeny peoples modern China proper. The Miao have been able to retain their independence to the present day, by taking refuge in the inaccessible fastnesses of mountain chains.

The barbarous tribes of the north and west, the Ti and the Ch'iang, were never permanently subdued. This was simply because their lands never invited conquest. Their storm-swept pastures offered the Chinese no adequate compensation for the toil and danger involved in such an undertaking. On the contrary, as we have seen, it was the wealth and fertility of China that tempted constantly, throughout the eight hundred years of the Chou dynasty, the fierce and hungry tribes of the north and west to make their predatory incursions. These are the quarters from which conquering armies have once and again risen up, like the sands of their deserts, to overwhelm parts or the whole of the empire. To repel the aggressions of these troublesome neighbors was the chief occupation of the Chinese armies in the earliest times, as it has continued to be down through all the ages. The oldest extant Chinese poetry, older than any history, shows us the Chinese warrior, like the magic horseman of Granada, with the head of his steed and the point of his lance directed always towards the north as the source of danger. History shows that the princes who were employed to hold these enemies in check generally held in their hands the destinies of the empire. And in this way the northern tribes exercised for centuries, throughout the third or Chou dynasty, an indirect but important political influence.

To give only two examples, both from the most ancient

period of authentic history:—The house of Chou, the most illustrious of the twenty-four dynasties, rose from a small warlike principality in the mountains of the north-west; they were made strong by conflict with their savage enemies, and their chief was regarded as the bulwark of the nation. Hsi Po,* the Lord of the West, or Wên Wang, as he is now called, excited by his growing power the jealousy of his suzerain, the last emperor of the second or Shang dynasty, and was thrown into prison by the tyrant, who did not dare, however, to put him to death. In the panic caused by a sudden irruption of the north men, Wên Wang was set free, and invested with even greater power than he had ever possessed before. To the day of his death, he remained loyal; but his son, Chou Fa, or Wu Wang, employed his trained forces, like a double-edged sword, not only to protect the frontier and drive back the invaders, but to overturn the throne of his master, the last emperor of the Shang.

After the lapse of over eight hundred years, the house of Chou was replaced by the house of Ch'in which had been cradled among the same mountains and made strong by conflict with the same enemies. During the Chou period (1122 B. C. to 255 B. C.), the barbarians never ceased to be a factor in the politics of the empire; not merely making forays and retiring with their booty, but driving the Chinese before them, occupying their lands, and planting themselves in the shape of independent or feudal States, as the Goths and Vandals did within the bounds of the Roman empire. The analogy does not stop here. Like the Roman empire, China had, in the early part of the Chou period, two capitals, one in the west near Hsi An Fu (about one hundred miles south-

* Mencius says that T'ai Wang, the grandfather of Hsi Po, paid tribute to the Tartars.

west of the great bend of the Huang Ho), in Shensi; and another in the east, near the present K'ai Fêng Fu, in Honan. The former was sacked by the Tartars in 781 B. C., just as Rome was by the Goths in 410 A. D.

The story, as given by Chinese writers, is as follows:—The emperor Yu Wang had a young consort on whom he doted. One day it came into his head to give a false alarm to the armies surrounding the capital, merely to afford her an amusing spectacle. Beacon fires, the signal of imminent danger, were lighted on all the hills. The nobles came rushing to the rescue, each at the head of his retainers. Finding there was no real danger, they dispersed in a state of high indignation. The young empress had her laugh; but they laugh best who laugh last, as the proverb has it. Not long after this, the Tartars made a sudden attack. The beacon fires were again lighted, but the nobles, having once been deceived, took care not to respond to the call, lest they should again be making a woman's holiday. The city was taken, and the silly sovereign and his fair enchantress both perished in the flames. However much of the legendary there may be in this narrative, the one stern fact that lies at the bottom of it is the presence of a ferocious enemy whom we call by the general name of Tartars.

After this calamity, the heir to the throne removed his court to the eastern capital, leaving the tombs of his fathers in the hands of the barbarians. In the heart of the central plain, and surrounded by a cordon of feudal States, the imperial throne was thought to be secure. But the irrepressible foe was forcing his way to the south and east, with a slow but resistless motion. A hundred and thirty years later (about 650 B. C.), we have the spectacle of a barbarian horde in actual possession of the eastern capital, and the emperor a refugee, pleading

for re-instatement at the hands of his vassals. As might be expected, the blame of the catastrophe is again charged on a woman. That woman was a barbarian, and the fact throws a strong light on the position of the contending parties.

Her tribe had established itself in the rich alluvial region on the southern bend of the Yellow river. As enemies, they were a standing menace to the capital; as friends, they might serve for its janizaries. In order to win their favor and secure their fidelity, the emperor took one of their princesses into his harem. Captivated by her charms, he subsequently raised her to be the partner of his throne. An ambitious kinsman, desirous of supplanting the emperor on the throne, began by supplanting him in the affections of his barbarian wife. Her infidelity being discovered, she was sent back to her kindred, where she was joined by her paramour, who stirred up the powerful clan to avenge an insult done to them in her person. The emperor was easily put to flight; but, wanting the support of the nobles, the usurper's tenure of the capital was of short duration.

Subsequently the barbarians menaced the capital frequently, if not constantly; and the Son of Heaven was more than once compelled to appeal to his vassals for succor. On one occasion, his envoys even turned against him, and went over to the enemy, apparently deeming it better to serve a growing than a decaying power. About forty years earlier than the flight of the emperor above mentioned, another barbarian beauty, named Li Chi, played a conspicuous and mischievous role at the court of Ch'in Wên, the greatest chief of the vassal States. Taken in battle, she captivated her princely captor, and maintained by her talents the ascendancy which she at first owed to her personal attractions. She induced the prince

to change the order of succession in favor of her offspring, sowing the seeds of a family feud that brought the princely house to the verge of destruction.

Of these immigrant Tartar tribes, no fewer than five or six are mentioned in the Confucian Annals as having succeeded in establishing themselves in the interior of China. Two of them (called Red and White,—probably, like the Neri and Bianchi of Florence, from the color of their clothing, or of their banners) were settled within the bounds of the present province of Shansi; one in Honan; one in Chihli; and two in Shantung. How they effected a settlement is not difficult to understand. In an age of anarchy, when rival States were contending for the hegemony, the great barons found it to their interest to secure the aid of troops of hardy horsemen from the northern plains, rewarding their service by grants of land. The emperor sought in the same way to strengthen himself against his unruly vassals. And so, at last, by too great dependence on foreign auxiliaries, the empire became unable to shake off its helpers.

How deeply seated was the antagonism between them and the Chinese may be inferred from one or two examples. The emperor being about to despatch a body of those hired auxiliaries to chastise a disobedient subject, one of his ministers warned him against a measure which would be sure to alienate his friends, and strengthen the hands of the common enemy. "If," said the minister, "the prince finds his moral influence insufficient to secure order, his next resort is to make the most of the ties of blood. But let him beware of throwing himself into the arms of a foreign invader." This counsel reminds us of the remonstrance of Lord Chatham against the employment of savages, in the conflict with the American colonies. We may add that India and China both

came under the sway of their present rulers through the mistaken policy of depending on foreign auxiliaries.

With the Chinese, it was a practical maxim that no faith was to be kept with those invaders; and a terrible vengeance was sometimes taken for the insults and perfidy to which they were subjected.

Another fact may be cited, which shows at once the power of the barbarians and the horror in which they were held. In the sixth century B. C., the rising civilization of China was on the point of being overwhelmed by them, when a deliverer was raised up in the person of Duke Huan, of Ch'i, who turned the tide at the critical moment, as Theodoric did the onslaught of the Huns under Attila. How imminent was the peril of the empire, and how eminent the merit of the victor, is apparent from a reply of Confucius to some one who supposed that he had spoken disparagingly of Duke Huan. "How could I disparage Duke Huan?" he exclaimed; "but for him we should all have been buttoning our coats on the left side," i. e., we should have been subject to the Tartars.

Thus far, we have occupied ourselves with what we may call an outline of the political relations of the Chinese with the northern tribes in war and in peace. The ethnography of those tribes now claims our attention, if only to show the impossibility of arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. The doubts expressed by the best authorities as to the ethnological relations of the Hsiang Nu have already been referred to. Conspicuous as they are in history for many centuries about the commencement of the Christian era, it has been much disputed whether they were Turks, Mongols, or Huns. How much greater is the difficulty of identification as we travel back to a period where the torch of history sheds but a feeble

ray, or disappears in the vague obscurity of legendary tradition.

In those remote ages, the guiding clue of philology fails us. While a few names that appear in the less ancient literature, such as Hui Ku and T'u Chüeh,* suggest the identity of the tribes that bore them with the Ouigours and Turks, there is absolutely nothing to be made out of the names that meet us most frequently in the earlier records. The vague terms Jung and Ti, under which were grouped peoples as diverse as the tribes of North American Indians, are always accompanied by some mark of contempt; the character for dog is prefixed to one, and incorporated with the other. Hsien Yuan, another name of frequent occurrence, has the dog radical in both its parts, and appears intended to confound the people who bore it with a tribe of dog-like apes. It could hardly be expected that writers, who deny their neighbors the attributes of humanity, would take an interest in depicting their manners or studying their language. Accordingly, we search in vain in the earlier Chinese literature for any such precious fragments of those northern tongues as Plautus, in one of his plays, has preserved of the Carthaginian. They themselves possessed no written speech; and, had they possessed it, they have left us no such imperishable monuments or relics of handicraft as, at this day, are throwing fresh light on the origin of the Etruscans.

A vast amount of undigested information is to be found in the pages of Ma Tuan Lin, relating to the border

* Hsiang Nu, Tu Chüeh, Hui Ku, Hsien Yuan, Hsün Yu, Pei Hu, Ta Ta (= Tartar) Hsien Pi, Su Shên. These are only some of the names that are given in a way more or less vague to the nomads of the North and West.

tribes of the middle ages. But outside the circle of the classics, the only descriptive geography that has reached us from the Chou period is the *Shan Hai Ching*, a kind of Chinese Gulliver, which peoples the world with monsters of every form and fashion. The older writers, in confounding numerous tribes under one or a few terms, were no doubt influenced by the fact that to them they all appeared under one aspect,—that of wandering hunters or shepherds, equally rude and equally ferocious.

No one who gives attention to such subjects can fail to be struck with a twofold process that takes place in the life of all nations, and most of all in that of nomadic tribes. The first is what we may call the stage of differentiation, through which they pass, when, small and weak, they keep themselves isolated from their neighbors: Even their languages diverge in a short time to such a degree as to be mutually unintelligible. The second is the stage of assimilation, when, brought into the collisions of war or the intercourse of trade, each gives and receives impressions that make them approximate to a common type. Thus the barbarians on the north of China present in the earlier ages a vague variety, which tends, with the lapse of time, to give place to uniformity of manners, and even of physical features.

Rolling over the plains, as the waves over the sea, their blood has been commingled; and, though their names have often changed, their physical type has probably remained unaltered. It is natural to raise the question,—What was that physical type? It has not been handed down either in painting or sculpture, and yet I think it is possible for us to recover it. It stands before us to-day, stamped on their descendants of the hundredth generation. As the Manchu and Mongol are to-day, such were the Jung and the Ti, co-eval with Assyria

and Babylon. The beautiful Aleuta, the hapless consort of the late emperor, was a Mongol. Her grandfather, the Grand Secretary Sai Shang A, having failed to suppress the Tai-ping Rebellion, was thrown into prison and condemned to death. His son, Ch'ung Ch'i, begged to share his fate, and tenderly served him in his confinement,—an act of filial piety which was subsequently rewarded by his elevation to the dignity of *Chuang Yuan*, or Scholar Laureate of the Empire. So eminent is this grade that his daughter was deemed a fit consort for the late Emperor T'ung Chih. For two short years she enjoyed her brilliant position, when, the Emperor dying, she refused food and followed him into the world of spirits.

More than two thousand years ago, other princes were captivated by the beauty of the daughters of the desert. The barbarians of those times were probably not inferior to the Chinese in form, feature, or natural intelligence, as their descendants are not inferior in any of these respects. Indeed Chinese, Manchus, and Mongols, as we see them in the city of Peking, are not distinguishable except by some peculiarity of costume.

Were they originally of one mould, or have the lines of distinction become gradually effaced by the intercourse of ages? The latter is, we think, the correct hypothesis. The primitive Chinese type, that imported by the immigrants who founded the civilization of China, is, we believe, no longer to be discerned. In the southern and central region, it has everywhere been modified by combination with the aboriginal inhabitants, leading to provincial characteristics, which the practiced eye can easily recognize. It has undergone, we think, a similar modification in the northern belt. It met here with tribes akin to those of Mongolia, and gradually absorbed them, and

to this combination are probably due the height and the stalwart physique of the Northern Chinese.

This process was going on in pre-historic times. History, at its earliest dawn, shows us unassimilated fragments of those tribes existing among the Northern Chinese. It also discloses a vast southward movement of the outside barbarians, checked for a time by the Great Wall, only to be renewed on a more stupendous scale. We have seen how small bodies infiltrated through every channel; we have also seen how, organized into great States, they established in China a dominion enduring for centuries. We are inclined to believe that they have stamped their impress on the people of North China as thoroughly as the Saxons have theirs on the people of England, or the Vandals theirs on that part of Spain which still bears their name in the form of Andalusia.

The former have made the language of the English essentially Germanic; and the language of northern China has been profoundly modified by Tartar influence. Hence we are told by Dr. Edkins that the ancient Chinese pronunciation is only to be found in the Southern provinces, where in fact we should look for it, in the region least affected by the tide of invasion.

If you inquire for the influences to which the invaders have in their turn been subjected, we answer that, in all ages, they have exchanged barbarism for such civilization as they found among the more cultivated race.

XXII

INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ANCIENT CHINA

THE treaties, by which China has been brought into closer relations with the nations of the West, and especially the establishment of intercourse by means of permanent embassies, have led Chinese statesmen to turn their attention to the subject of International Law.*

For them, it is a new study, involving conceptions which it would hardly have been possible for their predecessors to form at any time in the course of the last two thousand years; though, as we shall endeavor to show, they possessed something answering to it in their earlier history.

Their modern history commences two centuries before the Christian era; and, for our purpose, it may be divided into three periods. The first, extending from the epoch of the Punic wars down to the discovery of the route to the Indies by the Cape of Good Hope; the second, comprehending three centuries and a half of restricted commercial intercourse; the third, commencing with the so-called "opium war," in 1839, and covering the sixty years of treaty relations.

During the first, the Chinese were as little affected by the convulsions that shook the western world as if

* The works of Wheaton, Woolsey, Bluntschli, and others, on this subject, have been translated for their use by the author of this book.

they had belonged to another planet. During the second, they became aware of the existence of the principal States of modern Europe; but the light that reached them was not yet sufficient to reveal the magnitude and importance of those far-off powers. Within the last period the opening of the Suez Canal and the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway have brought them into what they regard as a dangerous proximity to formidable neighbors. And the rude experiences of five wars, each increasing in intensity until China was pitted against the world, have made them acquainted with the military strength of European nations.

Such are the steps by which China has been led to accept intercourse on a footing of equality with nations which, for three centuries, she had been accustomed to class with her own tributaries.

Her tributaries included all the petty States of Eastern Asia. Attracted partly by community of letters and religion, and partly by commercial interest, but more, perhaps, by the moral effect of her national greatness, they rendered a voluntary homage to the master of a realm so vast that, like Rome of old, it has always called itself by a title equivalent to *orbis terrarum*. These vassal States had few relations with each other, and it was not to be expected that China, acknowledging nothing like reciprocity in her intercourse with them, should learn from them the idea of a community of nations possessed of equal rights.

For twenty centuries she had presented to her own people, as well as to her dependent neighbors, the imposing spectacle of an empire unrivaled in extent, whose unity had been broken only by rare intervals of revolution or anarchy. During this long period, it was no more possible that an international code should spring up in

China than it would have been for such a thing to appear in Europe, had the Roman empire remained undivided until the present day. The requisite conditions were wanting. Where they exist, a code based upon usage, and more or less developed, comes into being by the necessities of the human mind.

These conditions are:

- 1st.—The existence of a group of independent States so situated as to require or favour the maintenance of friendly intercourse;
- 2nd.—That those States should be so related as to conduct their intercourse on a basis of equality.

If these conditions were conspicuously absent under the consolidated empire, they were no less obviously present in the preceding period, accompanied by every circumstance that could favor the development of an international code.

The vast domain of China proper was at that epoch divided between a number of independent principalities, whose people were of one blood, possessors of a common civilization already much advanced, and united by the additional bond of a common language.

These conditions concurred in ancient Greece, and the result was a rudimentary code, culminating in the Amphietyonic Council,—a provision for settling international disputes, which suggests comparison with the “concert” of European powers.

In ancient China, the conditions are similar, but the scale of operation is vastly more extended. There is, moreover, another important difference. The Chinese States were not, like those of Greece, a cluster of detached tribes who had together emerged from barbarism, without any well-defined political connection; they were

the fragments of a disintegrated empire, inheriting its laws and civilization, as the States of modern Europe inherited those of Rome.

The period during which they rose and fell was the latter half of the dynasty of Chou, pretty nearly corresponding to that extending from the birth of Solon to the close of the first century after the death of Alexander, which in China, as in Greece, was an age of intense political activity. The normal form of government for the empire was the feudal, the archetype of that which prevailed in Japan until it was swept away by the revolution of 1868. The several States were created by the voluntary subdivision of the national domain by the founder of the dynasty, who, like Charlemagne, by this arrangement planted within it the seeds of its destruction.

The throne of each State being hereditary, a feeling of independence soon began to spring up. The emperors were at first able to preserve order by force; and, even when shorn of their power, their court, like that of the Holy See in the Middle Ages, continued for a long time to serve as a court of appeal for the adjustment of international difficulties. At length, losing all respect for authority, the feudal princes threw off the semblance of subjection, and pursued without restraint the objects of their private ambition. This age is called by the native historians *chan kuo*, or that of the "warring States;" and that which preceded it, characterized by orderly and pacific intercourse, is described as *lieh kuo*, or the family of "co-ordinated States."

A family of States, with such an arena and such antecedents, could hardly fail to develop, in the intercourse of peace and war, a system of usages which might be regarded as constituting for them a body of international laws.

Accordingly, if we turn to the history of the period, in quest of such an indigenous system, we shall find, if not the system itself, at least the evidence of its existence. We find, as we have said, a family of States, many of them as extensive as the great States of western Europe, united by the ties of race, literature, and religion, carrying on an active intercourse, commercial and political, which, without some recognized *Jus gentium*, would have been impracticable. We find the interchange of embassies, with forms of courtesy, indicative of an elaborate civilization. We find treaties solemnly drawn up and deposited for safe keeping in a sacred place called *Mêng Fu*. We find a balance of power studied and practised, leading to combinations to check the aggressions of the strong and to protect the rights of the weak. We find the rights of neutrals to a certain extent recognized and respected. Finally, we find a class of men devoted to diplomacy as a profession,* though, to say the truth, their diplomacy was not unlike that which was practised by the States of Italy in the days of Machiavelli.

No formal text-book, containing the rules which for so many centuries controlled this complicated intercourse, has come down to our times. If such writings ever existed, they probably perished in the "conflagration of the books," which sheds such a lurid light on the memory of the builder of the Great Wall. The *membra disjecta* of such an international code as we have supposed are, however, to be found profusely scattered over the literature of those times,—in the writings of Confucius and Mencius; in those of other philosophers of the last five centuries B. C.; in various historical records; and particularly in the *Chou Li*, or *Rites of the Chou dynasty*.

The day may perhaps come when some Chinese Grotius

* See next chapter.

will gather up these desultory hints as carefully as the illustrious Hollander did the traces of international usages in Greece and Italy. To make even a partial collection of the passages in Chinese writers relating to this subject, would neither come within the scope nor the compass of the present chapter. All that I propose to myself, in addition to indicating, as I have done, the existence between the States of ancient China of a peculiar system of consuetudinary law, is to make a few citations confirmatory of the views expressed, and throwing light on some of the more interesting of the topics to which I have adverted.

The clearest view of the public law which was acknowledged by this group of States, after they became independent, is undoubtedly to be sought for in their relations to each other while subject to a common suzerain.

The greater States were twelve in number, and for ages that distribution of territory was regarded as no less permanent than the order of the heavenly bodies. It was consecrated by the science of astronomy as it then existed, and an ancient map of the heavens gives us a duodecimal division, with the stars of each portion formally set apart to preside over the destinies of a corresponding portion of the empire.

The names of the twelve great States may also be seen inscribed on the horizon of an azimuth instrument, made under the Mongol dynasty, circa 1320, and still preserved in the Observatory of Peking. What can better illustrate the depth of the sentiment connected with this territorial division than the fact that such a souvenir, associating it with the unchanging heavens, should be reproduced in the construction of an astronomical instrument fifteen centuries after the last of those States had ceased to exist!

Confucius appears to allude to this in a beautiful passage in which he compares the emperor, or the wise man—for the words have a double sense—to the polar star, which sits unmoved on its central throne, while all the constellations revolve around it. Could anything be devised more effectual than this alliance of geography and astrology, to place the territorial rights of the several States under the safeguard of religion? More picturesque than the Roman method of placing the boundaries under the care of a special divinity, it was probably more efficacious, and contributed in no small degree to maintain the equilibrium of a naturally unstable system, during a period which, in the West witnessed the rise and fall of the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek empires, entailing the complete obliteration of most of their minor divisions.

These twelve States had a great number of lesser principalities dependent on them, the whole constituting a political organization as multifarious and complex as that which existed in Germany under the sway of the "Holy Roman Empire." As in mediæval Europe, the chiefs of these States were ranked with respect to nobility in five orders, answering to duke, marquis, earl, viscount, and baron, the inferior depending on the superior, but all paying homage to the Son of Heaven, a title which was, even at that early period, applied to the Emperor, who had a right, for the common good, to command the service of all. In the annals of Lu, we find the following curious entry:

"In the ninth year of his reign, the Duke met in conference at Kuei Chiu the Duke of Chou, the Marquis of Chi, the Viscount of Sung, the Marquis of Wei, the Earl of Chêng, the Baron of Hsü, and the Earl of Tsao."

We note here the presence of all the five orders. The commentary of Tso, we may add, states the object of

the meeting as "the formation of a league and the promotion of friendly relations in accordance with *authorized usage*."

The authorized usages here referred to constituted the basis of the international law of the time. They were contained in part in the *Chou Li*, or *Rites of the Chou dynasty*, published by imperial authority about 1100 B. C., and, in a somewhat mutilated form, extant at the present day. This Code defines the orders of nobility; prescribes a sumptuary law for each, extending even to their rites of sepulture; regulates the part of each in the public sacrifices; and lays down a form of etiquette to be observed in all their public meetings. It gives in detail the hierarchy of officers, civil and military; indicates their functions; fixes the weights and measures, the mode of collecting the revenue, and the modes of punishment; and all this mixed up with an infinitude of ceremonial detail which to us appears the reverse of business-like, but which was no doubt as well adapted to the character of the ancient Chinese as was the ritualistic legislation of Moses to that of the Hebrews.

Primarily obligatory on the immediate subjects of the imperial house, this Code was, secondarily, binding on all the vassals of the empire, by all of whom it was adopted in the minutest particulars, with the single exception of the State of Ch'in, in the extreme northwest, a State which obstinately adhered to the ritual and etiquette of the earlier dynasty of Shang, and, cherishing a spirit of alienation, became the secret foe and ultimately the destroyer of the imperial house.

With this exception, the laws and usages of the several States were so uniform—all being copied from a common model—that there was little occasion for the cultivation of that branch of international jurisprudence,

which in modern times has become so prominent under the title of the "conflict of laws."

Ideas derived from the feudal system were so interwoven with every part of this complicated legislation that its general acceptance formed the mainstay of the imperial throne. The great princes styled themselves vassals, though as independent as some of China's modern vassals, and, like these latter, paying formal homage only once in five or ten years.* They accordingly looked up to the emperor as the fountain of honor, and the supreme authority in all questions of ceremony, if not in questions of right.

Of this moral ascendancy, for which we can find no parallel better than the veneration which, in the Middle Ages nearly all Christian sovereigns were wont to show to the Holy See, we have a remarkable example in the *Kuo Yu*. The emperor, Hsiang Wang, 651 B. C., being driven by a domestic revolt from his territories—a small district in the center of the empire, which may be compared with the Pontifical States recently absorbed by the kingdom of Italy—was restored to his throne by the powerful intervention of the Duke of Ch'in. In recompense for such a signal service, the emperor offered him a slice of land. The duke declined it,† and asked, instead, that he might be permitted to construct his tomb after the model of the imperial mausoleum. The emperor, viewing this apparently modest request as a dangerous assumption, promptly refused it, and the duke was compelled to abide by the recognized *Code of Rites*.

The possession of this common Code, originating in

* A decennial tribute mission from Burmah is solemnly promised in a treaty with Great Britain.

† According to some of the histories, he finally accepted it, when balked in his loftier aspirations.

the will of a common suzerain, contributed to maintain for nearly a thousand years among the States of China, discordant and belligerent as they often were, a bond of sympathy in strong contrast with the feelings they manifested toward all nations not comprehended within the pale of their own civilization. When, for instance, the Tartars of the north-west presented themselves at the court of Ch'in, requesting a treaty of peace and amity, and humbly offered to submit to be treated as vassals of the more enlightened power,—“Amity,” exclaimed the prince, “what do they know of amity? The barbarous savages! Give them war as the portion due to our natural enemies.” Nor was it until his minister had produced five solid reasons for a pacific policy that the haughty prince consented to accept them as vassals.

In the history of those times, the curtain rises on a scene of peaceful intercourse which, in many ways, implies a basis of public law. Merchants are held in esteem, one of the most distinguished of the disciples of Confucius belonging to that class; and a rivalry subsists between the several princes in attracting them to their States. Their wares are subjected to tolls and customs; but the object is revenue, not protection.

The commerce of mind reveals relations of a still more intimate character. The schools of one State are often largely frequented by students from another; and those who make the greatest proficiency are readily taken into the service of foreign princes. Philosophers and political reformers travel from court to court, in quest of patronage. Confucius himself wanders over half the empire, and draws disciples from all the leading principalities.

A century later, Mencius, with the spirit of a Hebrew prophet, proclaims in more than one capital his great

message that "the only foundation of national prosperity is justice and charity."

It was to this kind of intercourse that Ch'in, the rising power of the North-west, was indebted for the ascendancy which it slowly acquired in the affairs of the empire, and which eventually placed its princes in possession of the imperial throne, its rulers having adopted the policy of seeking the best talent of neighboring States for viziers and generals.

The personal intercourse of sovereign princes forms a striking feature in the history of those times. Their frequent interchange of visits indicates a degree of mutual confidence which speaks volumes for the public sentiment. Confidence was, indeed, sometimes abused, as it has been in other countries; but such intercourse was always characterized by courtesy, and mostly by good faith.

On one occasion, when a powerful prince came with a great retinue to visit the Duke of Lu, Confucius, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs, adopted such precautions, and conducted the interviews with such adroitness, that he not only averted what was believed to be a danger, but induced the foreign prince to restore a territory which he had unjustly appropriated.

A visit of the Duke of Ch'in to the Duke of Lu may be mentioned, as illustrating the freedom and familiarity which sometimes marked this princely intercourse. The host accompanied his guest as far as the Yellow River. The latter, learning during a parting entertainment that the former had not yet received the *Kuan li**—a rite an-

* *Kuan li*—literally the "cap ceremony"—the formal assumption by a youth of a kind of cap distinctive of mature age. Now completely disused, this was formerly one of the "four great rites," and the references to it in the ancient books remind

swering in the case of nobles somewhat to the conferring of knighthood—offered, then and there, to confer it. It was objected that the means were wanting for performing the ceremony with due solemnity; and the capital of Wei being nearer than his own, the Duke of Lu proposed to proceed thither for the purpose. They did so, and the rite was celebrated with suitable pomp in a temple borrowed for the occasion.

General meetings of the princes for the purpose of forming or renewing treaties of alliance were of frequent occurrence. Embracing what were then regarded as all the leading powers of the earth, these meetings present a distant, but not faint, parallel to the great congresses of European sovereigns.

The more usual form of friendly intercourse between the States of China was, as elsewhere, by means of envoys.

The person of an envoy was sacred; but instances are not wanting of their arrest and execution. In the latter case, they were regarded as spies, and the punishment inflicted on them was considered as a declaration or act of war. In the former, the violence was sometimes defended on the ground that the envoy had undertaken to pass through the territory into a neighboring State without having first obtained a passport, his visit being at the same time held to have a hostile object. Ordinarily, an envoy was treated with scrupulous courtesy, the ceremonial varying according to his own rank, or that of his sovereign. Questions of precedence, which often arose, were decided according to settled principles; but the rules

us of the pomp with which the *toga virilis* was assumed by patrician youth at Rome. Still, as between nobles, I can think of no better analogy than that given in the text.

were by no means as clear and simple as those enacted by the Congress of Vienna.

A dispute of this kind arising between the envoys of two duchies at the court of Lu, one claimed precedence on the ground that his State was more ancient than the other. The minister of the latter replied that his sovereign was more nearly related to the imperial family. The difficulty was happily terminated without bloodshed, which was not always the case with such quarrels in Europe prior to 1815. The master of ceremonies reminded the litigants that the placing of guests belongs to the host, and gave preference to the kinsman of the emperor.

Insults to envoys were not unfrequently avenged by an appeal to arms. Of this, a notable instance was an insult given by the Prince of Chi, at one and the same time, to the representatives of four powers.

These envoys arriving simultaneously, it was observed by some wag (the court fool, perhaps) that each was marked by a blemish or deformity in his personal appearance. One was blind of an eye; a second was bald; another was lame; and the last was a dwarf. It was suggested to the duke that a little innocent amusement might be made out of this strange coincidence. The prince, acting on the hint, appointed as attendant or introducteur to each ambassador an officer who suffered from the same defect. The court ladies, who, concealed by curtains of thin gauze, witnessed the ceremony of introduction and the subsequent banquet, laughed aloud when they saw the blind leading the blind, and the dwarfs, the bald, and the lame, walking in pairs. The envoys, hearing the merriment, became aware that they had been made involuntary actors in a comedy. They retired, vowing

vengeance, and the next year saw the capital of Chi beleaguered by the combined forces of the four powers, which were only induced to withdraw by the most humiliating concessions on the part of the young prince, who, too late, repented his indecent levity.*

In the history of Tso, we find a rule for the sending of envoys, which has its parallel in the diplomatic usage of modern nations. Speaking of a mission to a neighboring State, he adds: "This was in accordance with usage. In all cases where a new prince comes to the throne, envoys are sent to the neighboring States to confirm and extend the friendly relations maintained by his predecessor."

The highest function of an envoy was the negotiation of a treaty. Treaties of all kinds known to modern diplomacy were in use in ancient China. Signed with solemn formalities, and confirmed by an oath,—the parties mingling their blood in a cup of wine, or laying their hands on the head of an ox to be offered in sacrifice,—such documents were carefully treasured up in a sacred place called *Mêng Fu*, the "Palace of Treaties."

We are able to give, by way of specimen, the outlines of a treaty between the Prince of Chêng and a coalition of princes who invaded his territories in 544 B. C.

PREAMBLE:—The parties to the present Treaty agree to the following Articles:

Article I.—The exportation of corn shall not be prohibited.

Article II.—One party shall not monopolize trade to the disadvantage of others.

* This story is derived from a comparison of the three leading historians of the period, who differ only in unimportant details. In an amplified form, it is to be seen on the boards of Chinese theaters at the present day. The Chinese theater, like that of Greece, is, for an illiterate public, the chief teacher of ancient history.

Article III.—No one shall give protection to conspiracies directed against the others.

Article IV.—Fugitives from justice shall be surrendered.

Article V.—Mutual succor shall be given in case of famine.

Article VI.—Mutual aid shall be given in case of insurrection.

Article VII.—The contracting powers shall have the same friends and the same enemies.

Article VIII.—We all engage to support the Imperial House.

RATIFICATION OATH.—We engage to maintain inviolate the terms of the foregoing Agreement. May the gods of the hills and rivers, the spirits of former emperors and dukes, and the ancestors of our seven tribes and twelve states, watch over its fulfilment. If any one prove unfaithful, may the all-seeing gods smite him, so that his people shall forsake him, his life be lost, and his posterity be cut off.

The outline of a similar convention is given by Mencius. On that occasion, the great barons were called together by Hsiao Po, Prince of Ch'i, for the purpose of effecting needful reforms in 651 B. C. Being a century earlier than the other, it is instructive to compare the two documents. While in that of later date the Imperial authority is so far gone that the barons engage to uphold the Imperial House, in the earlier compact the authority of the Suzerain is fully recognized,—each article of the convention being styled an "Ordinance" of the Emperor.

That his hold on his vassals was already much weakened is, however, evident from the provisions that they are not to exercise certain powers of sovereignty in the way of rewards and punishments, without at least formal reference to the "Son of Heaven."

The stipulations are partly in favor of good morals, and partly to facilitate intercourse, and to raise the character of the official hierarchy.

Article I.—To punish the unfilial; not to change the succession to the throne (of any state); and not to raise a concubine to be a wife.

Article II.—To respect the virtues and cherish talent.

Article III.—To honor the aged and to be kind to the young, and not to neglect strangers.

Article IV.—Officers not to be hereditary; proxies not to be permitted. Suitable men to be sought and found. Death not to be inflicted on nobles without reference to the Emperor.

Article V.—Not to divert water-courses, nor obstruct the transport of grain. Not to grant land in fief without reference to the Emperor.

CONCLUSION.—All we who are parties to this Covenant agree to be at peace with each other.

“These five rules,” adds the philosopher, “are openly violated by the nobles of our day.”

In addition to the rites of religion by which such engagements were ratified, they were usually secured by sanctions of a less sentimental character. As in the West, hostages or other material guarantees were given in pledge; sometimes also they were guaranteed by third parties, who, directly or indirectly interested, engaged to punish a breach of faith. We have, for instance, one prince, demanding the mother of another as a hostage. The case is instructive in more than one of its aspects. The Prince of Ch'in, calling on the Prince of Chi to recognize him as his chief, and to surrender his mother as a pledge of submission, the latter replies that his State was created the peer of the other by the will of the former emperors, and that one who would despise the patent of an emperor was not fit to be the head of a League. As to the demand for his mother as a hostage, that was a proposition so monstrous that, rather than submit to it, he would meet the enemy under the walls of his last fortress.

At this point, the affair takes a turn which serves to illustrate a procedure of frequent occurrence in the history of those times. The princes of two neighboring States come forward as mediators, and bring about an accommodation on less oppressive conditions.

The more enlightened writers of Chinese antiquity condemn the practice of exchanging hostages, as tending to keep up a state of *quasi* hostility and mutual mistrust. No writers of any nation have been more emphatic in insisting on good faith as a cardinal virtue in all international transactions. Says Confucius:—"A man without faith is like a wagon without a coupling-pole to connect the wheels." Speaking of a State, he says:—"Of the three essentials, the greatest is good faith. Without a revenue and without an army, a State may still exist; but it cannot exist without good faith."

It remains to speak of the intercourse of war. "*Inter hostes scripta jura non valere at valere non scripta*"—is a principle that was as well understood in ancient China as among the ancient nations of the Western world; and war in China was, to say the least, not more brutal than among the Greeks and Romans.

The command of Alexander to spare the house of the poet Pindar, if it shows a degree of literary culture, indicates, on the other hand, that moral barbarism which asserts a right to the spoils of the conquered. In China, we find the same state of things; *vae victis* is the sad undertone in every narrative of military glory, relieved, indeed, by brilliant instances of generosity and mercy. We find an invading chief enjoining, under penalty of death, respect for the very trees that overshadow the tomb of a philosopher, and at the same time setting a price on the head of a rival prince.

Every military leader proclaims, like Achilles, that

"laws are not made for him;" yet we do not despair of being able to show that laws existed in war as well as in peace, even though they were systematically trampled on. With this view, we shall call attention to the following facts:

First.—In the conduct of war, the persons and property of non-combatants were required to be respected.

This we infer from the praise bestowed on humane leaders, and the reprobation meted out to the cruel. In Chinese history, the example of those who have achieved the easiest and most permanent conquests is always on the side of humanity.

Second.—In legitimate warfare, the rule was not to attack an enemy without first sounding the drum, and giving him time to prepare for defense.

The following instance goes beyond this requirement, and reminds us of the code of chivalry which made it infamous to take advantage of an antagonist. The Prince of Sung declined to engage a hostile force while they were crossing a stream, and waited for them to form in order of battle before giving the signal to advance. He was beaten, and, when reproached by his officers, he justified himself by appealing to ancient usage. "The true soldier," said he, "never strikes a wounded foe, and always lets the gray-headed go free. In ancient times it was forbidden to assail an enemy who was not in a state to resist. I have come near losing my kingdom, but I would scorn to command an attack without first sounding the drum."

We are not surprised to learn that the captains of that age "laughed at the simplicity of the unfortunate prince."

After the battle of Agincourt the French commander might have been laughed at on the same grounds. Not

only did he allow the English to cross the Somme, he even sent a message to the King asking him to name a day for the engagement.

Third:—A war was not to be undertaken without at least a decent pretext.

These words, in fact, are almost a translation of an oft-quoted maxim, *Shih ch'u yü ming*, "For war you must have a cause that may be named." This indicates that passion and cupidity were held in check by public opinion pronouncing its judgment in conformity with an acknowledged standard of right.

Another maxim, equally well known, makes the justice of the cause a source of moral power which goes far to compensate the inequality of physical force.

"Soldiers are weak in a bad cause, but strong in a good one," said the ancient Chinese, assigning as high a place to the moral element as our own poet, when he says,—"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just."

Fourth:—A cause always recognized as just was the preservation of the balance of power.

This principle called to arms not merely the States immediately threatened, but those also which by their situation, appeared to be remote from danger.

Not to speak of combinations to resist the aggressions of other disturbers of the public peace, we find, 320 B. C., six States brought into line to repress the ambition of Ch'in. This powerful coalition, the fruit of twenty years' toil on the part of one man, who is immortalized as the type of the successful negotiator, was, we may add, after all destined to fail of its object. The common enemy succeeded in detaching the members of the league, and in overcoming them one after another. The arch of States which protected the throne of their suzerain being destroyed, the conqueror swept away the last vestige

of the house of Chou, which for upwards of eight hundred years had exercised a feudal supremacy over the princes of China. Proclaiming himself under the title of *Shih Huang Ti*, the "first of the autocratic sovereigns," he abolished the feudal constitution of the empire, at the same time that he completed the Great Wall. His successors to the present day are called *Huang Ti*, and the system of centralized government which he inaugurated is as firmly established as the Great Wall itself.

Fifth:—The right of existence, prior to the revolution just noticed, was, in general, held sacred for the greater States which held in fief from the Imperial Throne.

This right is often appealed to, and proves effectual in the direst extremity; e. g.,—the Prince of Ch'i, at the head of a strong force, enters Lu, with an evidently hostile intent. Chan Hsi, a minister of Lu, is sent to meet him, in the hope of arresting his progress. "The people of Lu appear to be very much alarmed at my approach," said the prince. "True," replied the minister, "the people are alarmed, but the ruler is not." "Why is not the ruler also," inquired the invader, "when his troops are in disorder, and his magazines as empty as a bell? On what does he repose his confidence that he should affect to be superior to fear?"

"He rests on the grant which his fathers received from the ancient emperors," said the minister. He then proceeded to vindicate the rights of his master, under what was recognized as the traditional law of the empire, with such force that the prince desisted from his purpose, and withdrew without any further act of violence.

A similar instance, it will be remembered, has been cited already in another connection,—the case in which a prince, after urging in vain this same plea,—the sacred-

ness of the imperial grant,—was saved from humiliation or extinction by the mediation of neighboring powers, who recognized and were determined to uphold the principle.

A third example of the kind is one in which the existence of the now feeble remnant of the imperial domain was itself at stake. The Prince of Ch'u, after a victorious campaign against other foes, crossed the Rubicon and entered the territories of the house of Chou, with the evident intention of seizing the imperial throne. The emperor, unable to oppose armed resistance, dispatched Wang Sun Man, one of his ministers, to convey a supply of provisions to the invading army, and to ascertain the designs of its leader. The latter veiled his purpose in figurative language, asking to be informed as to the "weight of the nine tripods,"—insinuating that, if not too heavy, he intended to carry them away. The minister, without answering directly, gave the history of the tripods, relating how they had been cast in bronze by Ta Yu, the founder of the first great dynasty, and emblazoned with a chart of the empire in relief; how for fifteen centuries they had been preserved as emblems of the imperial dignity; and, exposing in a masterly manner the necessity of respect for that venerable power to the order of the several States, he concluded by saying—"All this being true, why should Your Highness ask the weight of the tripods?"

The chief, struck by the force of his arguments, which, like the most effective on such occasions, were purely historical, renounced his nefarious purpose, and retired to his own dominions.

Sixth:—Finally, the rights of neutrals were admitted, and to a certain extent respected.

It has been remarked that, in the wars of Greece, there were no neutrals. Those who desired to be such, if they

were so situated as to be of any weight in the conflict, were always compelled to declare themselves on one side or the other. This was not the case in China. The neutral frequently rejected the overtures of both parties, and his territories interposed an effectual barrier in the way of the belligerents. We have numerous instances of passage being granted to troops without further participation in the conflict, and one case in which a wise statesman warns his master against the danger of such an imprudent concession. "In a former war," said he, "you granted it to your detriment; if you do so again, it will be to your ruin." His chief failed to profit by the warning; and the prince thus unjustly favored, after destroying his antagonist, turned about and took possession of the territory of his friend.

CONCLUSION.

It is, as we have intimated, quite possible that textbooks on the subject of international relations may have existed in ancient China, without coming down to our times, just as the Greeks had books on that subject, of which nothing now survives but their titles. Whether this conjecture be well founded or otherwise, enough remains, as we have shown, to prove that the States of ancient China had a Law written or unwritten, and more or less developed, which they recognized in peace and war. The Book of Rites and the Histories of the period attest this.

Of these histories, one was acknowledged as constituting in itself a kind of international code. I allude to the *Annals of Lu* edited by Confucius and extending over two centuries and a half. Native authors affirm that the awards of praise and blame expressed in that work, often in a single word, were accepted as judgments from which

there was no appeal, and exercised a restraining influence more potent than that of armies and navies.

Chinese statesmen have pointed out the analogy of their own country at that epoch with the political divisions of modern Europe. In their own records, they find usages, words, and ideas, corresponding to the terms of our modern international law ; and they are by that fact the more disposed to accept the international code of Christendom, which, it is no Utopian vision to believe, will one day become a bond of peace and justice between all the nations of the earth.

XXIII

DIPLOMACY IN ANCIENT CHINA

INTERNATIONAL diplomacy is an art new to the Chinese, but one for which they evince a marvellous aptitude. From the inquiry on which we are about to enter, it will, we think, be made apparent that with them it is rather the revival of a lost art,—an art in the creation of which they can claim the distinction of precedence over all existing nations.

Under that famous dynasty of Chou when sages were born, and when those books were produced which rule the thought of the empire, diplomacy took its rise. Akin to the spirit of war, it flourished most in that period when the central power had lost its control, and vassal states engaged in ceaseless struggles over the division of their patrimony.*

Diplomacy may be defined as the art of conducting the intercourse of nations. It supposes the existence of states

* There are three well known works that relate to this period, viz:—

The History of the Warring States, called *Chan Kuo Ts'ê*.

A *Romance* founded on the preceding, called *Lieh Kuo Chih*, an expanded history of the feudal ages.

The National History of Sze Ma, called *Shih Chi*.

As an authority, the *Romance* is of no value. The *National History* derives its materials from the same source as the other two works, but, as they have been passed through the sieve and weighed in the balance of the great author, I have taken it for my guide so far as facts are concerned, reserving to myself always the right of interpretation.

which carry on their intercourse on a footing of equality. This makes it evident why it flourished in the period referred to, and why it disappeared for two thousand years, to reappear in our own day, like a river that, after flowing for a time underground, rises to the surface with an increase of volume. As etiquette is the outgrowth of a society of individuals, so diplomacy springs from a society of states. Robinson Crusoe, spending his life on a lonely island, can hardly be supposed to occupy his thoughts with the rules of good breeding, and, although "Monarch of all he surveyed," he had no use for diplomacy.

The triumph of Ch'in, by which these numerous States were swept from the arena, was the death-blow of diplomacy.

The empire was thenceforth one and indivisible, from the desert of Tartary to the borders of Yünnan, and from the foot of the Himalayas to the shores of the eastern sea. No rival, no equal, was known to exist on the face of the globe. Envoys no longer sped on secret missions from court to court. Alliances ceased to be formed, because there was none whose friendship could bring strength, or whose opposition could occasion danger. The outside world was synonymous with barbarism, and the "inner land" comprised, for the Chinese, the whole of human civilization. Inferior states came with tribute, and went home laden with patronizing gifts. Diplomacy in any proper sense was impossible. All that the Chinese of later ages could know of it was a legend of the past, which connected itself with a few illustrious names.

The best way to treat the subject will be to take up those "names," and evoke from them the busy actors in a slow but momentous revolution.

The revolution, which some of them endeavoured to

further, while others strove in vain to arrest, was the rise in the north-west of an ambitious, aggressive, semi-barbarous power, which eventually swallowed up its rivals, and remained sole master of the field.

To trace the steps by which a petty principality, the guardian of a remote frontier, advanced to such eminence that all the older and more civilized states combined to check its progress, forms one of the most instructive chapters of Chinese history. Of the early stages of the unfolding drama, we can only remark that, as in the later stage, the principal actors on the side of the growing power appear to have been foreigners. The princes of Ch'in, rude and uncultivated as they were, displayed for the most part that element of greatness, which consists in the choice of the fittest instruments. The Duke Hsiao (368 B. C.), conscious of the backward state of his people, made proclamation that if any man, native or foreign, should devise a new method for promoting the prosperity of his dominions, he would be rewarded by a grant of land and a patent of nobility.

One instance out of many will suffice to illustrate the effect of this policy. A young man by the name of Shang Yang, who had devoted himself to the study of political science, came to the court of Wei, his native state, in quest of employment. The prince was struck by his talents, but hesitated to take him into his service. "Kill him then," said an old minister, "but by no means allow him to give his great abilities to the service of a rival state." The prince did neither, and Shang Yang proceeded to the court of Ch'in, where he was invested with high office, and reformed everything, from army discipline to land tenure. It was largely through his influence that his adopted country attained such power as to threaten the independence of its neighbors.

It was then that diplomacy came on the stage as a leading factor in deciding the destiny of states. In more tranquil periods, it had occupied itself with matters of ceremony,—missions of compliment to express felicitation or condolence; or, if negotiation was engaged in, it seldom rose higher than the arrangement of the terms of a marriage. But now the diplomat became the most conspicuous figure of the age, rising above the general, because generals marched as he directed; more influential than princes, because the prince decided in accordance with the far-sighted views of his diplomatic adviser. Jove sat wrapped in his pavilion of clouds, and Mercury engrossed the scene as he sped back and forth on winged sandals.

If we follow some of these envoys, we shall not only obtain an impression of the importance of their functions, but get a clearer view of the history of the period than any other stand-point can afford us.

The scene is that portion of China lying to the north of the river Yangtze; the period of time, that in which Alexander and his successors were extending their conquests in western Asia.

The first diplomats to challenge our attention are Su Ch'in and Chang I. They are not, like Talthybius and Eurybates,* mere heralds or post-boys, whose duty it is to carry a message, and blow a trumpet. They are statesmen, full of self-acting energy; and each opposed to the other in a conflict that ends only with life. As in Greece, there was a school of statesmanship in which they acquired their arts, and above all the art of persuasion. The Academy to which they resorted was a wild gorge in the mountains of Honan, and the master to whose in-

* Compare this latter name, meaning "one who walks abroad," with "walkers,"—ancient Chinese for "envoys."

structions they listened is known to posterity by no other name than that of Kuei Ku Tze, "Philosopher of the Devil's Hollow."

I have read the books ascribed to his pen, but find in them nothing that can account for the eminence of his disciples;—nothing even that could have afforded them a suggestion of the career which they pursued with such wonderful success. The fact is, this lover of solitude was not a diplomatist, but an educator. Books were few in those days, existing only in manuscript copies; and the knowledge of letters, very restricted. It follows that the influence of the teacher was greater than it now is, when books are cheap, and libraries accessible to all.

Emerging from seclusion with the full consciousness of superior intelligence, Su Ch'in thought only of carrying his wares to the most promising market. That market was the court of the rude, rising power of the northwest, whose princes welcomed all who had anything to teach, and rewarded them with unexampled munificence. He was a native of the central state, born under the immediate sway of the suzerain; but he did not scruple to point out, to a great vassal, the way in which he might crush all lesser rivals, and possess himself of the throne of his imperial master. "My wings," replied the Prince, "are not sufficiently grown for so high a flight;" and so he dismissed the dusty traveller, who sought prematurely to embroil him with his fellow princes.

Mortified by ill success, Su turned homeward, vowing that the Prince of Ch'in should repent the blunder of suffering him to escape, after having rejected his advice. Arriving in rags, his wife and his brothers' wives treated him with ill-concealed disrespect. They looked on him as stark mad when, instead of applying himself to some-

thing profitable, he resumed his former studies with fresh ardor.

Su not only took pains to improve his style of speaking and writing, so that his argument would come with force from tongue or pen; he studied the history of each of the feudal states, acquainted himself with the *personnel* of their courts, drew maps of the empire, made estimates of the population and military strength of its several parts, and sketched plans of hypothetical campaigns.

After two years of intense application, he set off for the court of Yen, with a mind better furnished than on the occasion of his first abortive attempt. The capital of Yen is represented by Peking, and there it was that Su entered on a career of successful diplomacy, which extended over more than twenty years, and made him for all time the type of a Chinese diplomat. His patience, with him a leading virtue, was still to be sorely tried. Without money or influence, he found no ready way to open the doors of the great; and, for a whole year, he danced attendance on numerous courtiers, before he could induce anyone to procure him an interview with the Prince.

That interview was decisive. Su was not the only one who saw the danger to which the other states were exposed by the aggressions of Ch'in, but he was the only one who saw how it could be averted. In eloquent terms he set forth the urgency of immediate action, and showed that the only hope of successful resistance lay in the formation of an alliance, which, diverting the forces of the six states from the mad work of mutual destruction, would turn their united strength against their common foe.

The Prince was delighted. The feasibility of the

scheme was no longer doubtful; and, by carrying it into execution, he would secure the honor of taking the lead in a patriotic movement of unparalleled importance. Investing Su with the rank of ambassador, he despatched him with general credentials to the courts of the other five powers,—a precedent which the Chinese ministers of our day recalled when they sent Mr. Burlingame on a mission to the great powers of the two worlds,—a precedent which they still follow in accrediting a single envoy to half the courts of Europe.

Taking in order the courts of Chao, Han, and Wei, and then moving eastward to the court of Ch'i, Su exposed to each his plan of mutual defence, obtaining from each a pledge conditioned on the adhesion of all the rest. Further south, on the banks of the middle Yangtze, which then formed the southern limit of the empire and of civilization, was a power whose definite acceptance of the plan was essential to its success. This was the kingdom of Ch'u, occupying nearly the ground of the present province of Hupei.

Flattered by the cunning envoy with the hope of becoming head of the league, the Prince of Ch'u entered into it with great zeal, and sent Su on his return journey, loaded with fresh honors. The last link was thus added to a chain which he had been long and patiently forging,—a chain strong enough to keep an unscrupulous aggressor within bounds, and to secure in a great measure the blessings of peace to a family of states hitherto in perpetual conflict.

The achievement was one, the difficulty and grandeur of which it is not easy to over-estimate. The man who conceived the plan, and, with steady purpose, carried it through, deserved all the honors that were heaped upon him. Like Prince Bismarck, who, to the chancellorship

of the empire, added that of the kingdom of Prussia, Su held a duplicate, or rather a multiple office. His chief dignity was that of President of the Sextuple Alliance; and, in order that he might render it effective, each of the six powers conferred on him the seal of a separate Chancellorship.

Turning northward with a strong escort and immense retinue, he came to the border of his native state, which, years before, he had quitted in the guise of a palmer, staff in hand. Here he was met by messengers from the Emperor, who offered him a banquet, and gave him a welcome on behalf of their master, who, says the historian, "was alarmed at the power and magnificence of his quondam subject." A better explanation would be a generous acknowledgment of the success of Su Ch'in; or better still, a desire to make use of Su's diplomatic triumphs to restore the sinking prestige of the empire, menaced by the growing power of Ch'in.

What wonder that the members of his own family, who had treated him so shabbily, should now meet him with demonstrations of respect! "How comes it," he said to his elder brother's wife, who was throwing herself at his feet, "that you treat me so differently to-day from the time when I came home from the first journey?" "Because," said she with naïve candor, "you are now a great officer and have plenty of money."

Su was kind to his poor relations, and, distributing money with a lavish hand, proceeded to the Court of Chao.

There it was that he fixed his headquarters; not that the kingdom was great, or the prince influential, but because its geographical situation was such as to make it, to borrow a scientific phrase, the centre of political pressure. "From this point," says the historian, "by

the hand of a herald, he launched at the Prince of Ch'in a copy of the six-fold League." Imagine the satisfaction with which he submitted that document to the inspection of a potentate who had rejected his services, and who was now to be confined by it, as with a chain, within his proper bounds! "For fifteen years," adds the historian, "the armies of Ch'in did not dare to show themselves beyond the mountain pass of Han Ku."

What proof of success could be more striking! What doubt that, during this long period, Su had occasion to repeat often and again his weary circuit, in order to maintain his hold on the inharmonious elements which he had brought under his control!

On the East coast of Africa, there are places in which, we are told, it is impossible to induce three men to go together on an errand, because each fears that the other two may combine and sell him into slavery. So it was with these "warring states," as they are called in Chinese history. Each one regarded its nearest neighbors with profound distrust and aversion.

To overcome their centrifugal tendencies, and hold them together for so long a time, required a combination of qualities rarely equaled, perhaps never surpassed.

The masterly arguments, by which Su had originally conquered that ascendancy, are given *in extenso* in the voluminous work of Sze Ma Ch'ien. They are clear and eloquent, but they read more like genuine state papers than like the speeches that Livy is wont to put into the mouths of his heroes.

How skilfully he adapts his mode of address to the disposition of each ruler! In one he kindles ambition; in another he awakens jealousy, as his strongest passion, and directs it against the mighty foe. He practices on the fears of others, while flattering their pride; and one

(the Prince of Han), who was on the point of attaching himself to Ch'in, he deterred effectually by employing a proverb which, from that fact, has acquired an undying celebrity:—"Better be a chicken's head than an ox's tail," or, as Cæsar puts it, "First in a village rather than second at Rome."

Su's brother, Su Tai, was also an able diplomat, and gave him effectual assistance in bringing about the union of the powers. But I speak of him at present for the sake of citing a famous apologue, of which he is the author. History has not preserved any of his longer speeches. He was perhaps wanting in that lofty eloquence for which the elder Su was so distinguished, but he was endowed with a certain homely wit that carried conviction. Discoursing with one of the princes on the danger of disunion, he said:—"As I walked on the bank of the river, I saw a bird pecking at an oyster; the oyster closed its shell, and held the bird as in a vice. Just then, a fisherman came along, and captured both." The application was clear; whoever might be represented by the foolish fowl and the equally foolish shell-fish, there could be no doubt as to who was the lucky fisherman. In a concise form, this fable continues to be used as a proverb.* It is one of those shining nuggets which, in China, the departing stream of time has left so plentifully scattered among its sands.

Of the elder Su, I have said enough to establish his claim to transcendent talents. What was the League itself but a creation of genius? And its maintenance for fifteen years, was it not a marvelous manifestation of power? Yet, like other great men, he had his weaknesses. Able in governing others, he was impotent to control his own passions; and to that cause, more than to

* When bird and fish quarrel, both fall a prey.

any other, was due the final overthrow of the fabric which he had spent his life in erecting.

Through jealousy and anger, he made an enemy of Chang I, who ever after sought to work his ruin. Yielding to a more tender passion, he became involved in an undiplomatic intrigue, flight and death being the disastrous consequence.

Finding himself under the necessity of leaving the court of Yen, to escape the consequences of a *liaison* which he had formed with a princess, he begged the prince to send him on a mission to the kingdom of Ch'i, alleging that he could there promote his interests much better than by remaining at home. Arriving there, he entered the service of the foreign state; and subsequently, his intrigues against its welfare being detected, he was bound between two chariots and torn to pieces,—a melancholy emblem of the empire of that day, rent asunder by the opposing forces represented by the Leagues of the East and West.

Su's conduct in the kingdom of Ch'i finds a pretty close parallel in that of Chetardie at the court of Russia, who narrowly escaped a like hideous fate.*

Chang I stands next, by common consent, on the list of international statesmen of ancient times. In talent not much inferior to Su Ch'in, his career is wanting in that unity which imparts a kind of grandeur to the achievements of Su. His life was divided between internal administration and external politics.

* In a note to the *Guide Diplomatique* of de Martens, Volume I, page 83, we have a brief account of the incident alluded to. I cite here one or two lines only:—

“La Chetardie, ambassadeur de France, avait eu la principale part à la révolution qui plaça Elisabeth sur le trône de Russie.”

“La Chetardie s'était immiscé dans les intrigues de cour Il ne tarda pas à s'en repentir.”

As administrator and military chief, he served by turns three or four states, always giving a temporary preponderance to the one he served,—unlike his rival who served six at once, and promoted equally the interests of all.

As a negotiator, he effected one or two powerful alliances; but his chief claim to distinction is the skill he showed in sowing discord among the members of the eastern league, to avenge himself for an insult received at the hand of a faithless friend.

That insult was received on the threshold of his career. As Su had made an unsuccessful attempt in the north-west, so Chang began by a fruitless journey to Ch'u, in the south. In the meantime, his friend had risen to eminence, and he sought to join him at the court of Chao. Su, however, was as yet only forging the second link of his diplomatic chain. Whether he dreaded the disturbing influence of a mind too original to become a tool, or whether he feared that the lustre of Chang I's talent would obscure the brightness of his own, he treated him with disdain, and found means to send him away from the scene of his own activity. In his eagerness to rid himself of a possible rival, he even supplied him with money and with attendants, to escort him as far as the capital of the north-western kingdom.

Chang saw through the stratagem, and vowed that Su should repent of it. Winning the confidence of the Prince, he rose to the highest positions in the state, being sometimes general, sometimes diplomatic envoy, and more than once clothed with the dignity of prime minister.

As head of the administration, he developed the resources of the state, and prepared the way for its ultimate triumph. As a leader of troops he was uniformly successful; but it was in a third character,—that of diplo-

matist,—that he performed the most marvelous feats. Labouring to undo the work of Su, he contrived to keep him in a state of perpetual anxiety during his life-time; and ultimately to effect the dissolution of the confederacy immediately on the death of its founder.

The most remarkable incidents in his career occurred in the kingdom of Ch'u. On his first visit, which, as we have said, was unsuccessful, he had the misfortune to be set upon by his enemies and badly beaten. Taunted by his wife for his damaged appearance, he opened his mouth and asked her to see if his tongue was in its place. On her answering in the affirmative, he added,—“With this I shall retrieve my fortunes,”—and he kept his word. So great, indeed, were his powers of persuasion that he often disarmed hostility, and sometimes raised himself to power, where he had been menaced with destruction. To cite only one instance:—The Prince of Ch'in engaged in war with Ch'u, stirred up perhaps by his minister's hatred for the state where he had suffered his first great humiliation. The army of Ch'u was defeated, and Ch'in demanded, as the price of peace, the cession of a coveted territory in exchange for another. The worsted Chief replied with a grim joke:—“Give me your chancellor, and I will yield the territory, without asking a foot of ground in exchange.”—The Prince of Ch'in repeated this flattering proposal to his minister, but with no thought of compliance.

To his surprise, Chang I replied:—“I am ready; send me to the camp of the enemy.”

On arrival he was thrown into prison, and menaced with death; but he had one acquaintance, whom he could rely on as *amicus in curia*. Through this man, he conveyed to the reigning beauty a hint that the western prince was about to send a beautiful woman as his ran-

son. The lady took alarm, and procured his release without waiting for the ransom.

Just at that moment, the news of Su's death came to his ears, suggesting the possibility of turning his temporary captivity into a veritable victory. Seeking an interview with the Prince, under guise of thanking him for sparing his life, he sought to repay his debt of gratitude by tendering the best advice he was able to offer; that was that he should abandon the confederacy, and throw in his fortunes with his powerful neighbor. The Prince desired to hear the reasons for such a startling proposition; and Chang set them forth with clearness and force, concluding a discourse, not inferior to Su's best speeches, with a recommendation to cement the peace by accepting his neighbor's son as a hostage, and giving his own in exchange; and further to consolidate the union, by asking in marriage a princess of Ch'in. No translation can do justice to his masterly argument, because it bristles all over with allusions to places whose names are strange to European ears, and facts of history which, out of China, have no significance.

But the Prince, to whom it was addressed, understood it. Every word took effect;—how deep the effect may be judged from the fact that his kinsman, Ch'ü Yuan, the gifted poet, tried in vain to deter him from following the counsel of Chang I.

His energetic remonstrance is not too long to give in full. "Your Highness," said he, "has once and again been the victim of Chang I's deceptions. When your enemy had come into your hands, I took it for granted you would roast him alive. Now if you have relented so far as to refrain from putting him to death, why should you go a step further, and listen to his deceitful advice?"

The prince persisted, and, to make a long story short,

the poet, like Ahithophel, went away and destroyed himself, his hapless fate being commemorated by the annual festival of dragon boats.

On his way home, Chang visited the court of Han, and succeeded in detaching the prince of that country also from the confederacy.

Arriving at the capital of Ch'in, picture to yourselves the glory of his triumphal entry. He had gone forth alone and unattended, a voluntary peace-offering, to be sacrificed to the resentment of a hostile state. He returned leading in his train the envoys of that state, and those of another hereditary enemy.

The Prince of Ch'in was duly sensible of the value of this service, and conferred on the hero the lordship of five cities. So well had Chang I succeeded in his attempt to detach Ch'u and Han, that he resolved not to desist from his undertaking until the confederacy should be utterly demolished. At his request, his master commissioned him to proceed successively to the capitals of Chao, of Yen, and of Ch'i. The histories tell us what he said to each prince; how he tempered menace with flattery, so that, on reading each several discourse, we are not surprised that the prince, to whom it was addressed, should feel impelled by ambition, as well as by prudence, to follow the policy so powerfully advocated.

One by one, all of the states which Su had so laboriously arrayed against Ch'in, Chang I had the satisfaction of seeing at the feet of his master, humbly acknowledging the hegemony of the north-western power. Recall the long negotiations that were required to bring the petty states of Greece to accept the hegemony of Sparta or Athens, and you can appreciate the greatness of Chang I's diplomatic triumph.

For three centuries, the leadership among the feudal

states had been the great object of ambition. Four of them had enjoyed it in succession, feeling satisfied with that distinction without dreaming of attaining the imperial yellow.

Ch'in was the last to erect the standard of leadership, and Chang I's diplomacy was the proximate influence that led the other states to rally round it. A century was yet to elapse before Ch'in became bold enough to usurp the imperial throne,—an event which followed naturally on the destruction of the most loyal of its feudatories. But that is a history into which we have no time to enter. Nor have we time to pursue the fortunes of this consummate master of diplomatic intrigue further than to say that, losing power through the death of his patron, he returned to his native state, where he was invested with the honors of prime minister, and died the following year.

After the death of Chang, the eastern states, one by one, broke away from their allegiance to Ch'in. Kung Sun Yen, who all along had opposed the policy of Chang I, now that the latter was dead, exerted himself to resuscitate the confederacy, and succeeded in doing so, as Chang had succeeded in dissolving it, on the death of Su. Through his efforts, five of them were formed into a phalanx, with hostile spears pointing to the North-west. Kung Sun, as successor to Su, received the grand seal of chancellor of the union. This ephemeral success, easier far than the untried enterprise of his predecessor, causes him to be ranked among the noted diplomatists of that troubled period. We dismiss him with this brief notice, merely calling attention to him as chancellor of the second Eastern league.

In this second league, the principality of Chao took a leading part, as it had done in the first. In command of

the gate of the west, its strategic position was imposing; but it owed its influence in the league to its good fortune in possessing the ablest general and the most gifted statesman of the age. The general was Lien P'ò, and the statesman Lin Hsiang Ju, of whom we shall speak only in his character of envoy and negotiator.

Two incidents in his history will serve to throw light on the times in which he lived. His prince possessed a gem of great value, like the *koh-i-noor*, unique,—the envy of neighboring potentates. The Prince of Ch'in sent an embassy to offer fifteen cities in exchange for it. Its owner was afraid to refuse, and equally afraid to comply, lest the other party should not act in good faith. Lin, then a young official in the household, said to his master: —“You need not fear the loss of the gem; send me with it, and, if the cities are not surrendered, I will be answerable for its safe return.”

Arriving at the court of Ch'in, and appearing in the presence of the prince for the purpose of offering the gem, he discovered that the prince was inclined to play him false, by detaining the gem, and withholding at least a part of the price. On perceiving this, Lin stealthily slipped the gem into the bosom of a trusty servant, who, following an unfrequented path, conveyed it safely home. Lin, of course, remained at court, and, when the fact became known, he offered to give his life, if required, in lieu of the gem. The prince, appreciating his courage and fidelity, let him go unharmed. On reaching home, he was loaded with honours; and one hopes the faithful domestic was not forgotten. It is related of one of the crown jewels of Russia that, in a time of trouble, it was once given to a servant to convey to a place of safety. The servant said as he departed:—“If I should be slain by the way, you will find the jewel in my body.” He was

slain, and his master, recovering his body, found the jewel in his stomach.

The other incident in the life of Lin relates to a ceremonious meeting of two princes. They met on the common frontier, each accompanied by his diplomatic adviser. In a festive humor, the Prince of Ch'in asked his brother prince to favor him with a specimen of the music in which he was known to be a proficient. The request was unsuspectingly complied with, but Lin saw in it a design to treat his master with indignity. "Now," said he to the Prince of Ch'in, "it is your turn; please beat the tabor after the manner of your country." The prince hesitating, he added:—"If you refuse, I shall spatter my blood on your royal robes, as a protest against the affront you have put upon my master." Hearing this, the guards rushed upon him, and were about to cut him down; but his fearless bearing held them in check, and the haughty prince, not wishing to bring the conference to a tragic ending, gave a few beats on the tabor. The princes parted on equal terms; and Lin was raised to the highest rank in the state, for having saved the honour of his master.

When Bismarck lighted his cigar in the diet at Frankfurt,—a privilege regarded as belonging exclusively to the ambassador of Austria,—all Germany was astounded at his audacity. Not less were the states of China, at the boldness of Lin, in compelling the mightiest prince of the empire to keep time to his master's music. In either case, a trivial act was clothed with a grave political significance; and it evinced diplomatic talent of the highest order to turn it to account.

The famous general Lien P'o, who, previous to this occurrence, had enjoyed the first rank in his state, felt it as a personal outrage that a man, whom he looked

on as an upstart, should suddenly be raised above him. Forgetting that the statesman is above the soldier, and that good diplomacy requires the highest kind of statesmanship; he let it be known that, wherever he should meet his rival, he would insult him to his face. Lin, hearing of this threat, took pains to avoid a meeting. The general, remarking this, sent him a half contemptuous message, asking an explanation of his strange and undignified conduct, which he was not at liberty to impute to fear, after the proofs he had seen of Lin's personal courage. Lin replied:—"If I avoid an encounter, it is because your life and mine are indispensable to the safety of our country. If Ch'in refrains from attacking Chao, it is on account of us two. The Prince of Ch'in would be delighted to see us fall by each other's hands."

The general was so struck with this patriotic answer, and particularly with Lin's moral courage in exposing himself to a suspicion of cowardice rather than bring a calamity on his country, that he frankly confessed himself in fault, in the ceremonious fashion then in vogue. Coming to Lin's door with a rod in his hand, instead of using it on Lin, he begged that it might be applied to his own back. The two rushed into each other's arms, swore to be brothers, and sealed the covenant by drinking a cup of wine, mingled with blood drawn from the veins of both. Who, on hearing this, can fail to recall the manner in which Aristides and Themistocles laid aside their deadly feud,—how, when Xerxes was threatening the liberties of Greece, knowing that union is strength, they dug a pit and formally buried their enmity, not to be resurrected until the danger was past?

If I have followed the career of particular statesmen with considerable detail, it is because I have thought I might in that way present a more vivid picture of the

diplomacy of the period. Viewed from a moral standpoint, that diplomacy was not above criticism. It bears little resemblance to the transparent candor and immaculate integrity, which characterize the European diplomacy of our own day! For has not diplomacy, like everything else, risen above the level of former ages? Is it not a recognized maxim, in our enlightened times, that honesty is the best policy? Is it not equally a maxim that the advantage of each is found in the prosperity of all? What representative of a European power ever disguises the truth, or thinks of taking advantage of the ignorance or weakness of the power with which he is called to negotiate? In fact, what is diplomacy, as we understand it, but another name for philanthropy?

Chinese statesmen of the period under review had not yet attained to this sublime conception; "let every man work for his own master," was the maxim they openly professed,—a maxim often quoted to excuse deviations from rectitude.

Envoys went and came on all occasions calling for felicitation or condolence, and I will not assert that they were too high-minded to improve the opportunity to spy out the nakedness of the land; or that custom forbade them, while professing peace, to make preparation for war.

There existed a code of recognized rules for the regulation of intercourse by means of diplomatic envoys. I have touched on these in a previous chapter. My object in this, has been rather to show diplomacy in action, than to set forth either rules or theories. The following facts will prove interesting:—

1.—Among the privileges of ambassadors, as laid down in the ancient books of China, we find no trace of that convenient fiction known as extra-territoriality.

The hospitable Spaniard, in Buenos Ayres, sends you a card of invitation to come to "your own house," in such and such a street. So, western peoples have agreed that a diplomatic envoy, as guest of the nation, shall be considered as living and moving on his own ground. It is a little singular that the Chinese never thought of expressing their sense of the inviolable sanctity of such envoys in a similar manner, especially as their language is not wanting in similar fictions, dictated by courtesy or flattery.

As a principle, the sanctity of an ambassador's person was fully admitted; but in practice, it was frequently violated. Nor is that to be wondered at, in a state of society in which ambassadors regarded it as their main business to mingle in court intrigues.

2.—In the diplomacy of ancient China, there was no such thing as a minister plenipotentiary.

The sovereign always held himself free to disavow the acts of his representative, whenever it might suit his policy so to do. When the Chinese were first confronted with that term, in their negotiations with the west, they expressed some surprise, and declined to accept it. "There is only one plenipotentiary in the empire," they said; "that is the Emperor." It required nothing less than the storming of his forts to induce the Emperor to grant the title.

3.—In the diplomacy of ancient China, there was no such thing as a resident minister; they were all *envoyés extraordinaires*.

But they found occasion to prolong their stay for months or years; and, in many cases, they were kept going back and forth so frequently as to accomplish all the purposes of residence, together with the additional advantage of frequent conference with their chiefs.

As an example of the kind of reports they were expected to make, I may mention that Su Tai, the brother of the more noted Su, of whom we have heard, was once sent as ambassador to Ch'i. On returning, his master desired him to report on the state of that country, and the character of its prince, with particular reference to the question whether he was aspiring to the hegemony, or had any prospect of attaining it.

As an instance of frequent and prolonged missions, I may cite the case of Ch'en Chen. Being often sent on missions to Ch'u, he was accused by Chang I of enriching himself without benefitting his chief. Charged with drawing emoluments from two states, and making himself a *persona grata* at the foreign court without, in any way, improving the state of foreign relations, he defended himself successfully; and I only cite the case as an illustration of the point in hand.

4.—The political relations of the great states of ancient China afford a remarkable analogy to those of the states of modern Europe. In the former, the diplomacy of the period turned on the question of furthering or checking the progress of one power, which appeared to aim at universal dominion. Who shall say that the situation in Europe may not be described under the same formula? Reversing the points of the compass,—a political map of the one might serve, *mutatis mutandis*, for that of the other. And who shall blame the Chinese for reading the wars and alliances of modern Europe in the light of their own ancient history? When they read how for centuries the eyes of Russia have been fixed on the imperial city of the Bosphorus; how the first Napoleon, on the eve of his disastrous expedition, predicted the danger of Europe becoming Cossack; how, in 1854, the advance of Russia was checked by another Napoleon, in concert with Eng-

land; how, in 1878, she was compelled, by a conference of the Powers, to relinquish her prey when fairly within her grasp; and how in 1900 she absorbed Manchuria;—will they not believe that their great cycle has come round again, and that their own old drama is being repeated on a new and grander theater?

Though the aptitude of the Chinese for diplomacy is freely admitted, it is not so generally known that their collisions with foreign powers have mostly sprung from a want of diplomatic tact. Their long isolation and the immensity of the empire under one sovereign led them to despise other nations, and in disputes with them to resort to violence, instead of diplomacy.

In 1839, Lin brought on the opium war by depriving the foreign community of liberty and threatening them with death.

In 1857, Yeh provoked the 'Arrow' war by summarily executing for piracy a boat's crew sailing under the British flag.

In 1797 and 1816, China demanded the kotow of vassalage from Great Britain; and in 1859 she demanded it from the United States, thus alienating those who might have been her friends.

This spirit culminated in 1900 when a Tartar Dowager attempted to slaughter the envoys of eleven nations.

China needs to learn in the school of adversity.

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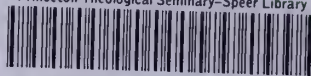
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